



WorkFirst Study Chart Book

January 24, 2001

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STUDY DESCRIPTION

The WorkFirst Study is providing information to improve the WorkFirst program by developing a better understanding of WorkFirst clients, the nature of their transition to self-sufficiency and the effects of various program elements over the course of five years. The survey collects information on a broad range of activities and characteristics, including:

- Family structure
- Employment activity
- Education and training
- TANF receipt
- WorkFirst activities
- Household income
- Health and insurance
- Housing
- Fringe benefits from work
- Food economics and food bank usage
- Children's school performance
- Childcare
- Mental health and substance abuse
- Domestic violence and criminal activity

The Study Sample consists of 3,043 respondents randomly selected from the statewide list of adults receiving TANF in March 1999, who will be interviewed annually for five years.

Data Collection is being conducted by the Social and Economic Sciences Research Center at Washington State University. Dr. Marieka Klawitter, from the Daniel J. Evans School of Public Affairs at the University of Washington, leads the study's research team. The project director is Dr. Greg Weeks, Deputy Assistant Commissioner, Employment Security Department.

General characteristics of the study sample:

		Months on TANF, March 1999 through December 1999		
		1-3 months	4-9 months	10 months
General characteristics of the study sample:	Sample Size	533	1,160	1,350
	Percent Female	93%	94%	95%
	Sample Size	498	1,095	1,277
	Median Age	30 Years	29 Years	31 Years
	Percent Married	29%	2%	15%
Female respondents:	Median number of Children	2 Children	2 Children	2 Children

All data that follow are for women receiving TANF in March 1999, unless otherwise noted.

Bars marked with equal percentages may appear unequal in height due to rounding of percentages.

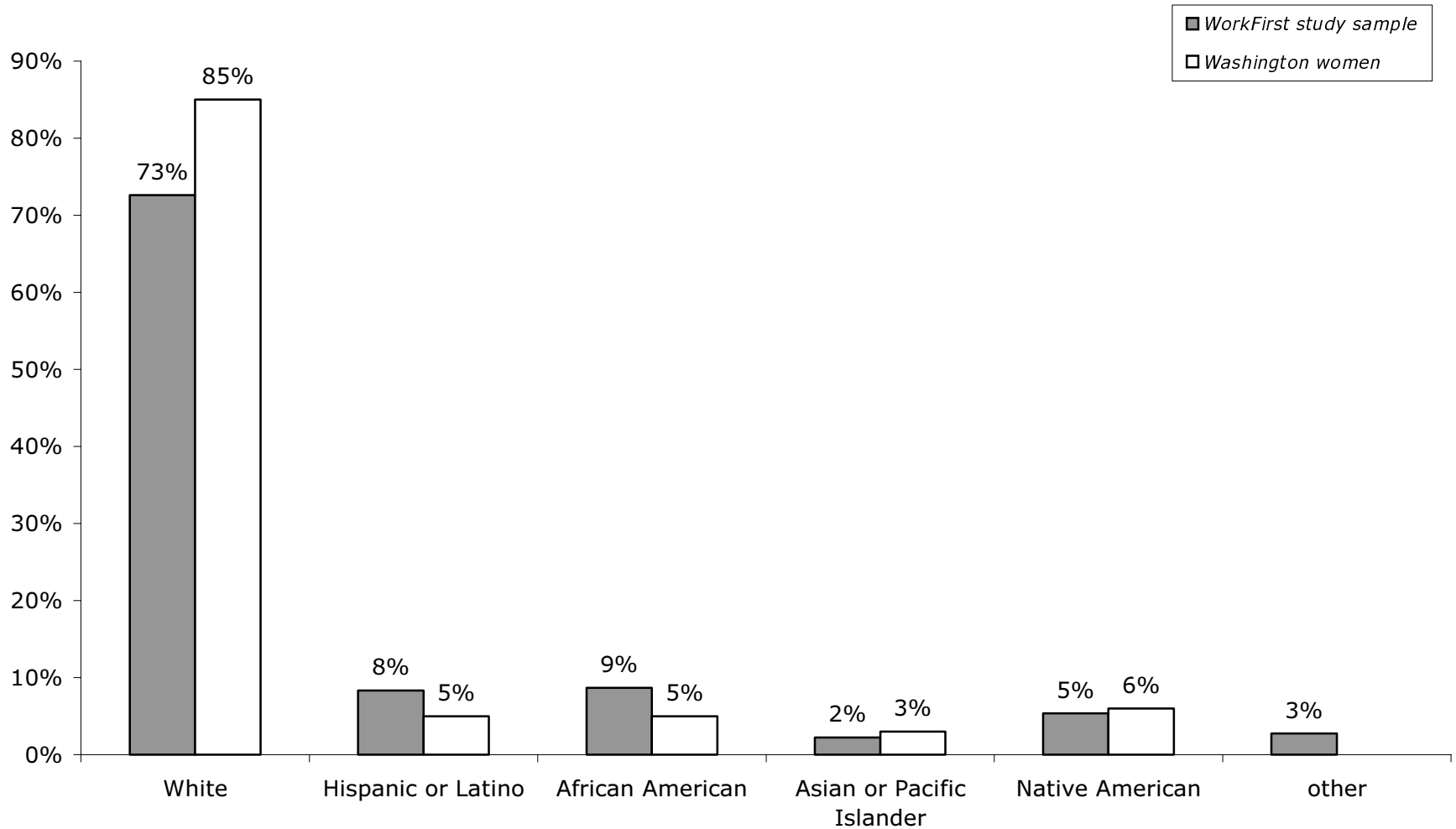
All data for "Washington women" are from the Office of Financial Management's 1998 Washington State Population Survey, unless noted.

Differences between groups on charts have not been tested for statistical significance.

DEMOGRAPHICS

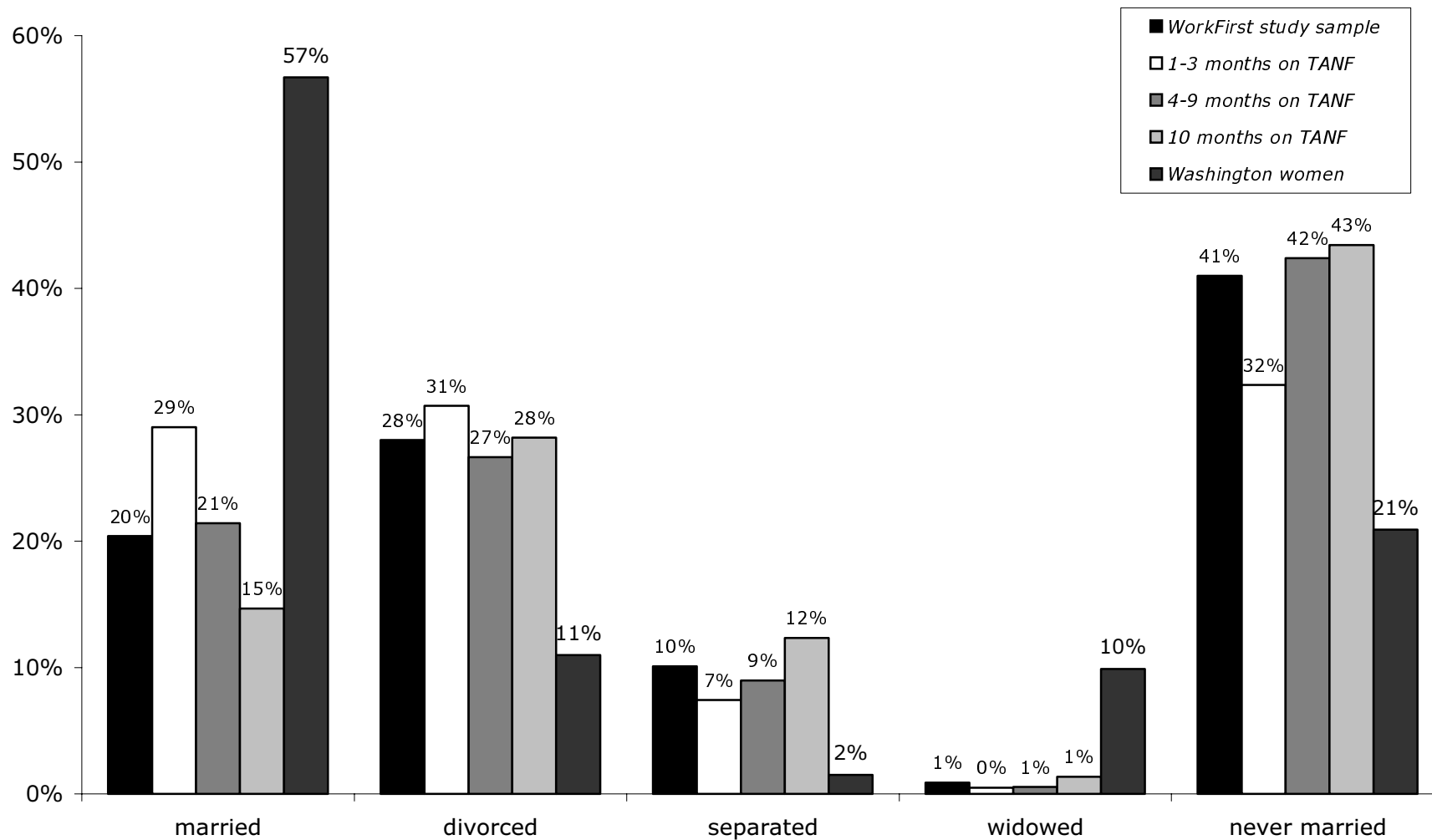
Race & Ethnicity

Nearly three-quarters of the TANF population is White.



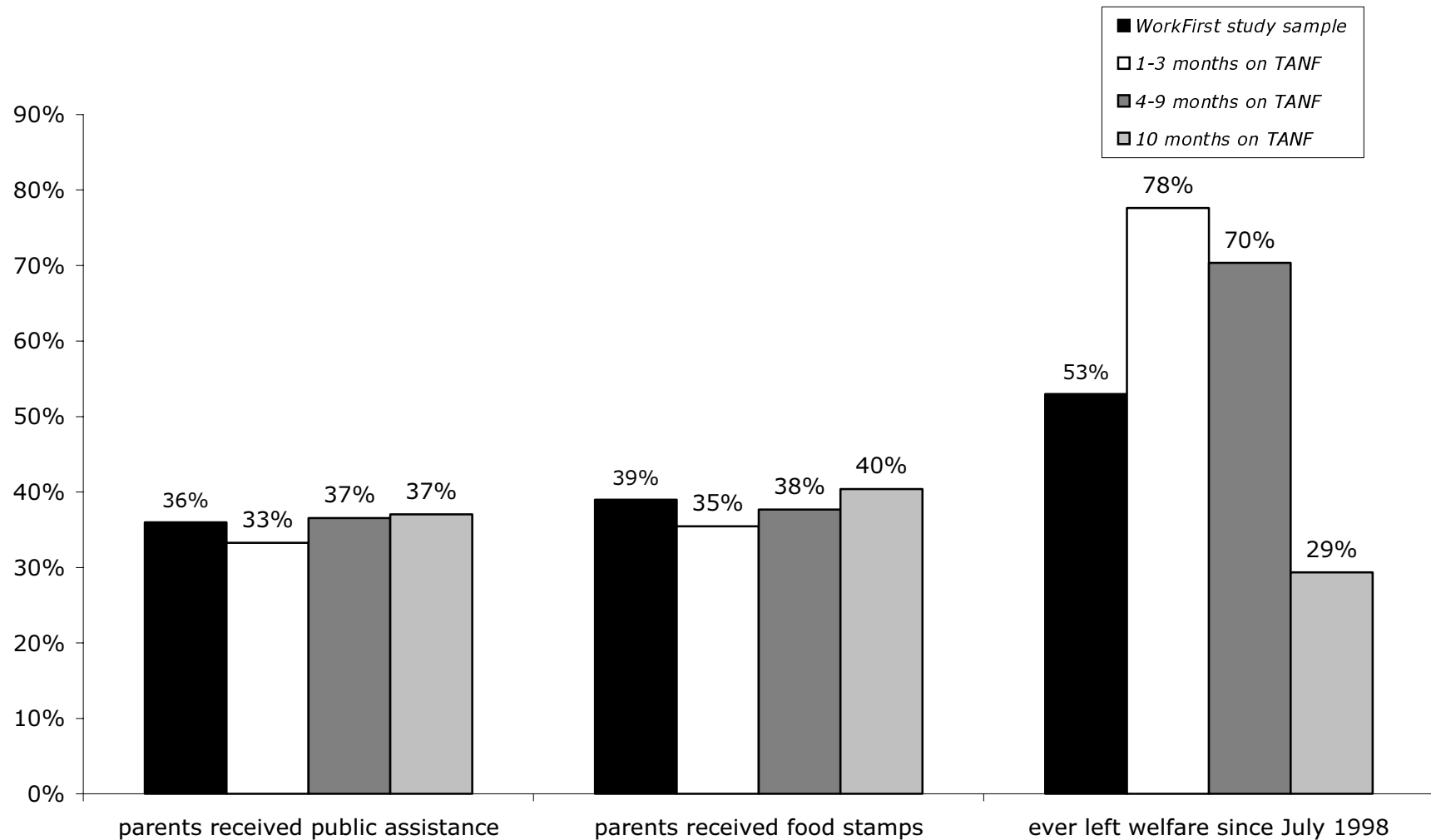
Marital Status

TANF recipients are less likely to be married than the Washington State population; among recipients, those who have been on assistance longest are least likely to be married.



Welfare History

A third of recipients come from families with a history of welfare receipt.
Most recipients have not been on welfare continuously.

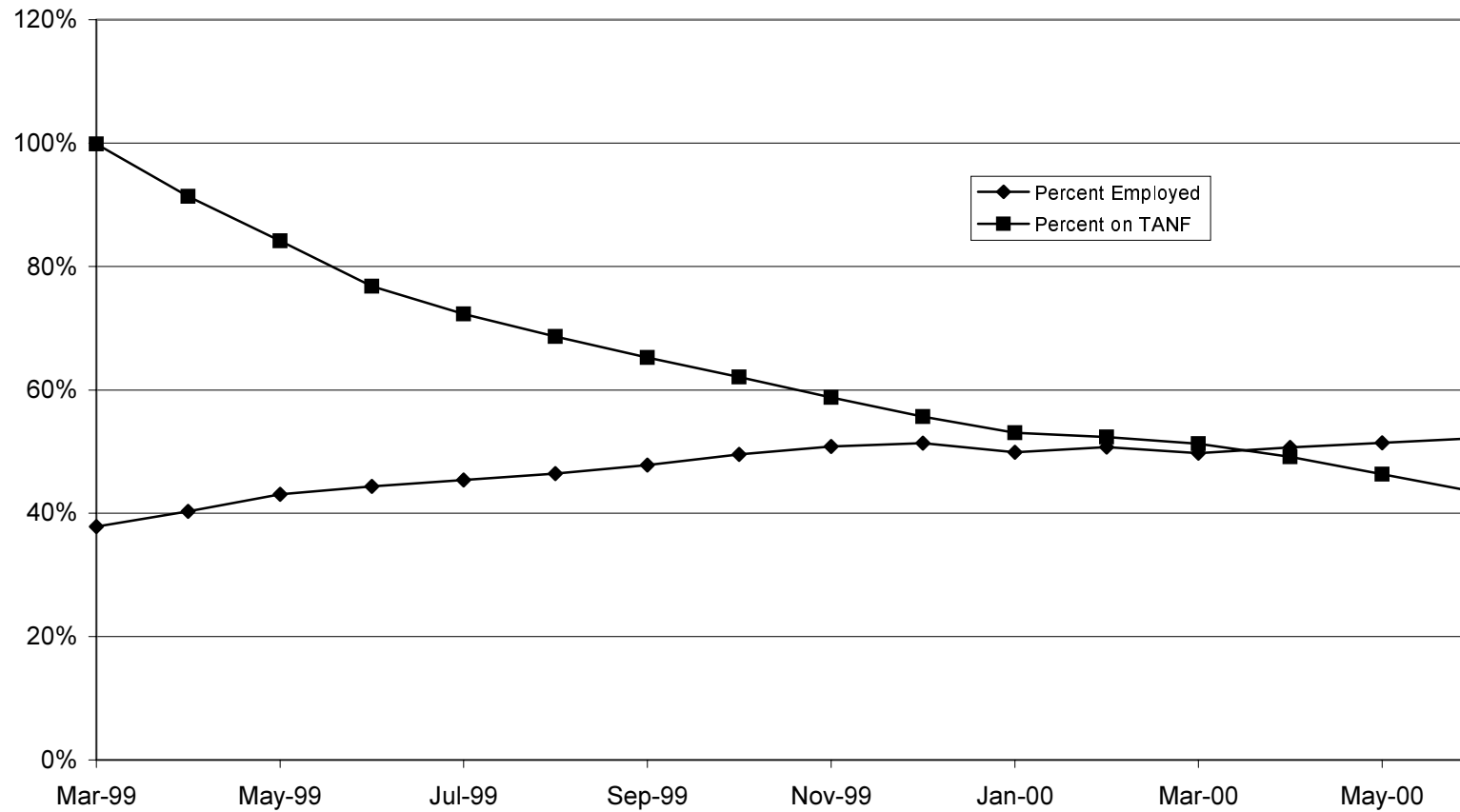


multiple responses are possible

INCOME & EMPLOYMENT

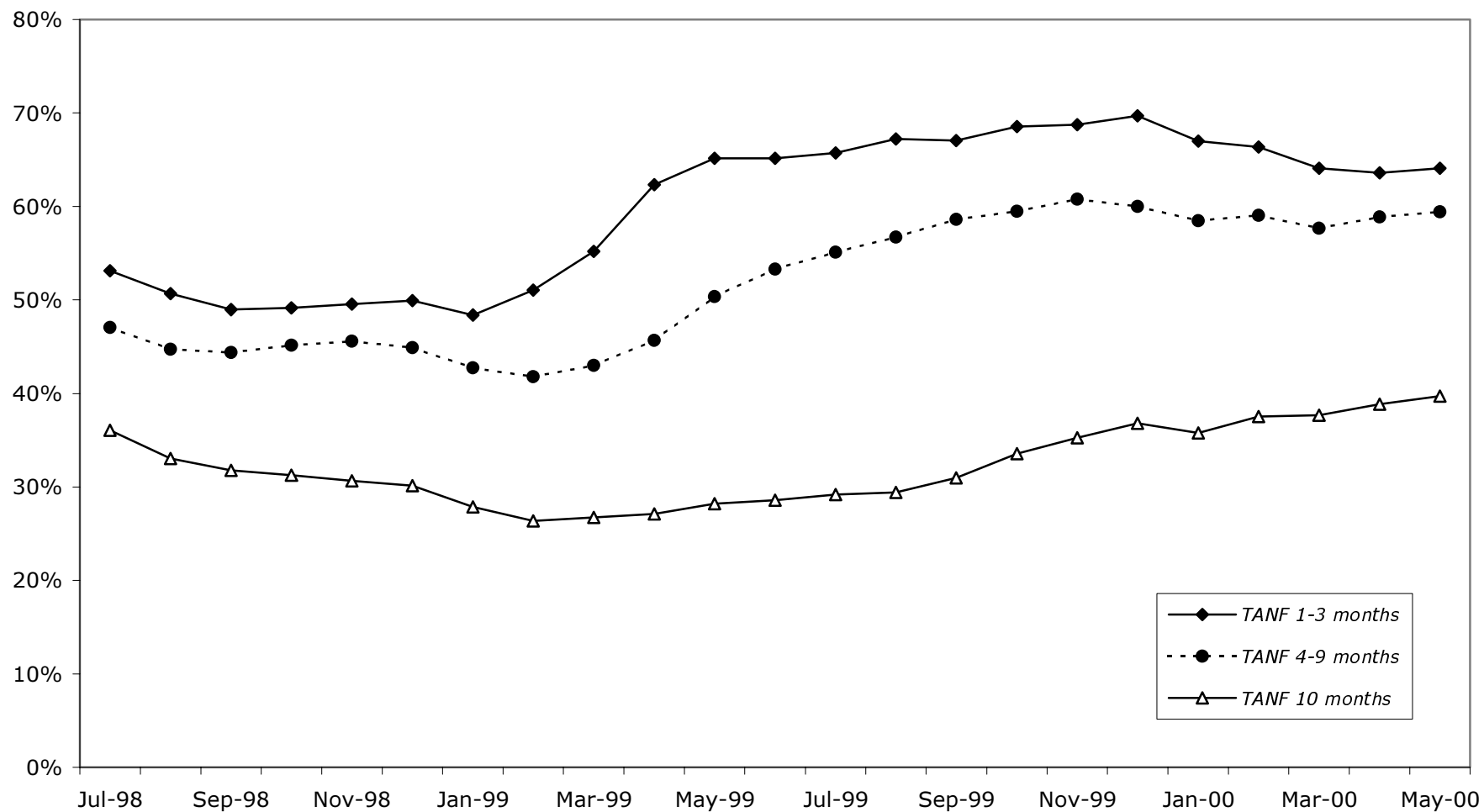
Employment and TANF Receipt

Fewer than half of WorkFirst participants in March 1999 were still receiving benefits one year later.



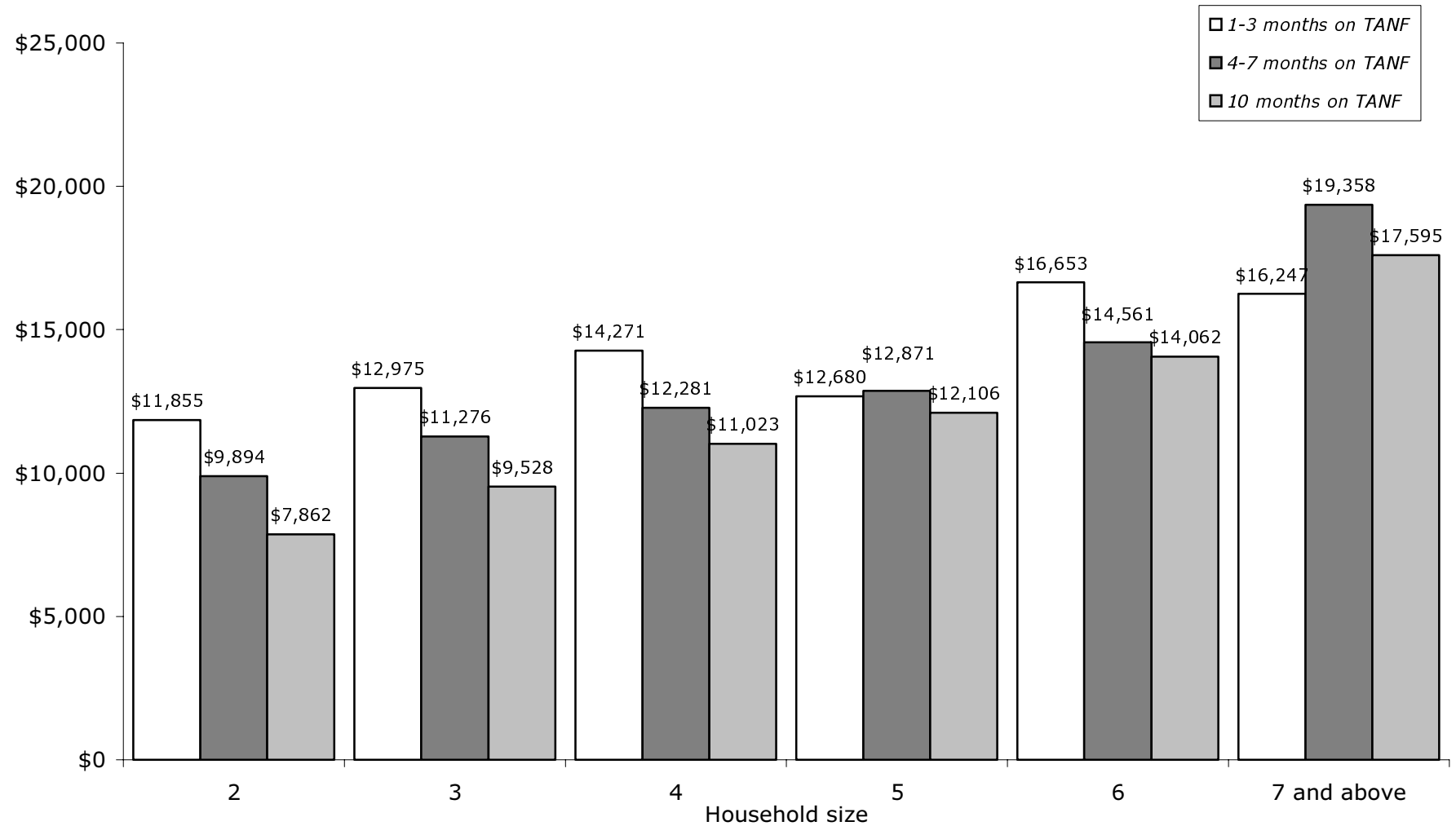
Employment Levels and Time on TANF

Over one-third of female recipients who were on TANF continuously were employed.



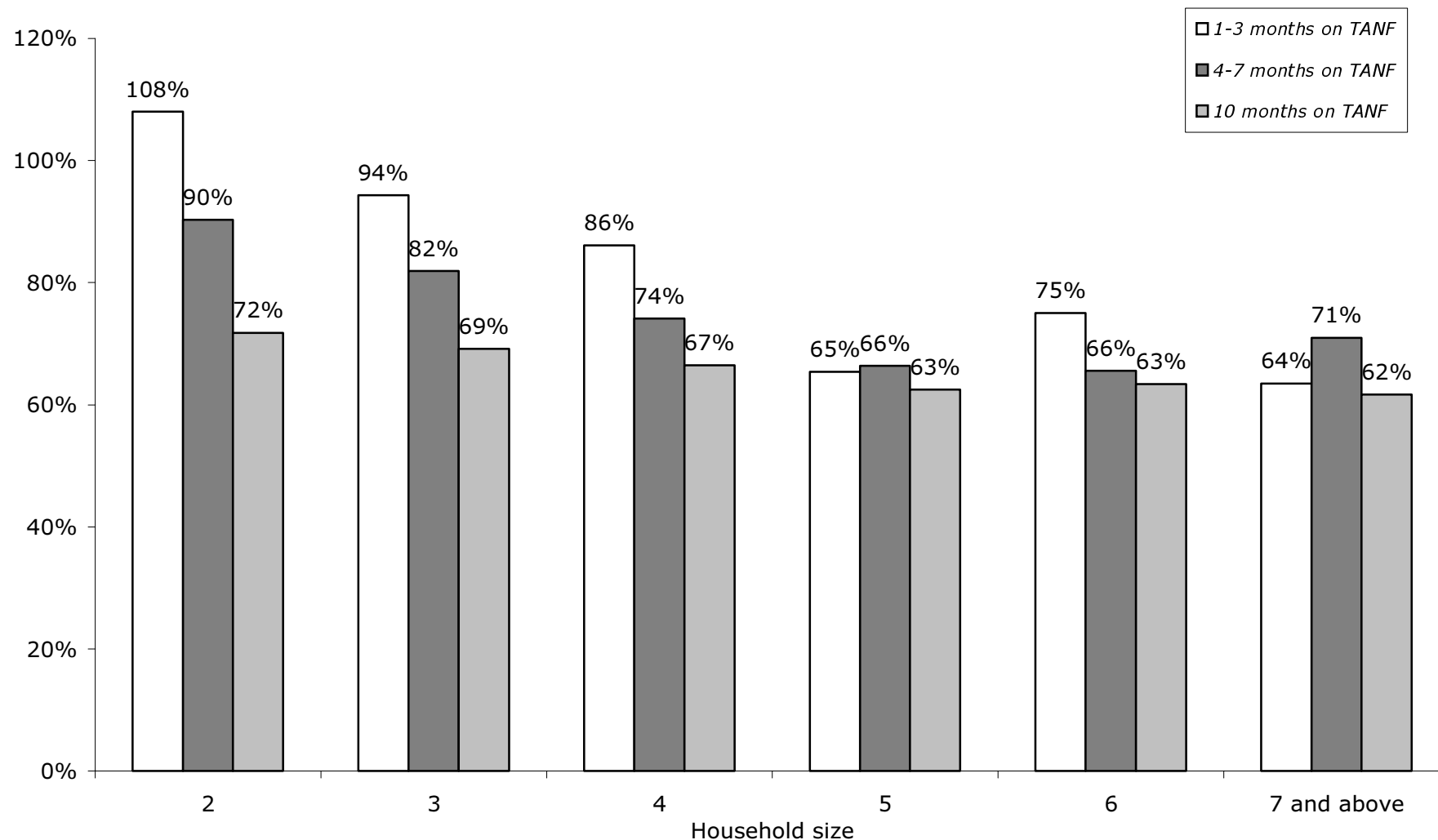
Median Household Income

WorkFirst Study sample families who have left TANF have higher incomes.



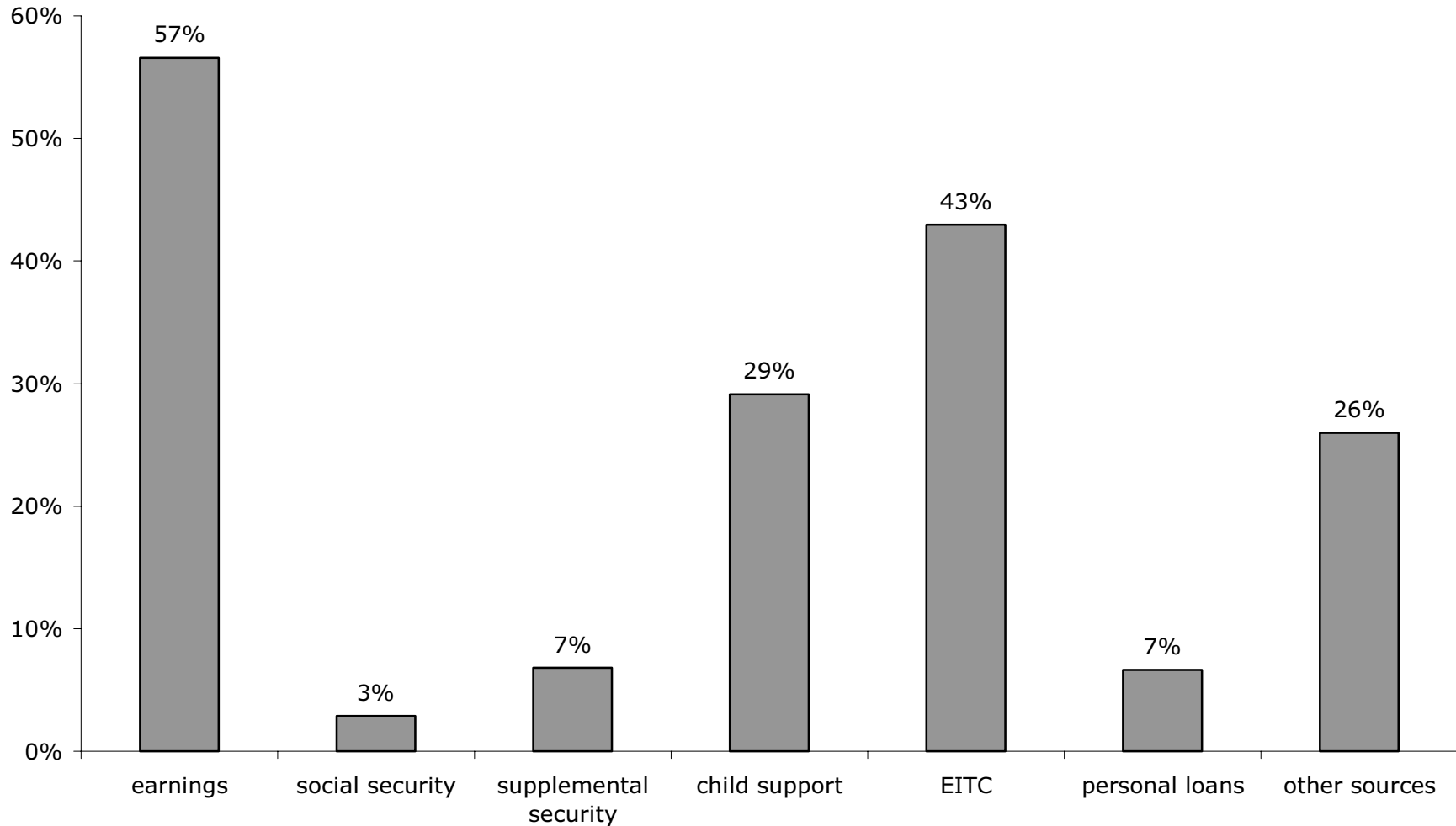
Household Income as a Percent of the Federal Poverty Level (median)

Longer TANF receipt is associated with more poverty, although most families receiving TANF have income below the federal poverty level.



Percent With Earnings and Supplemental Income

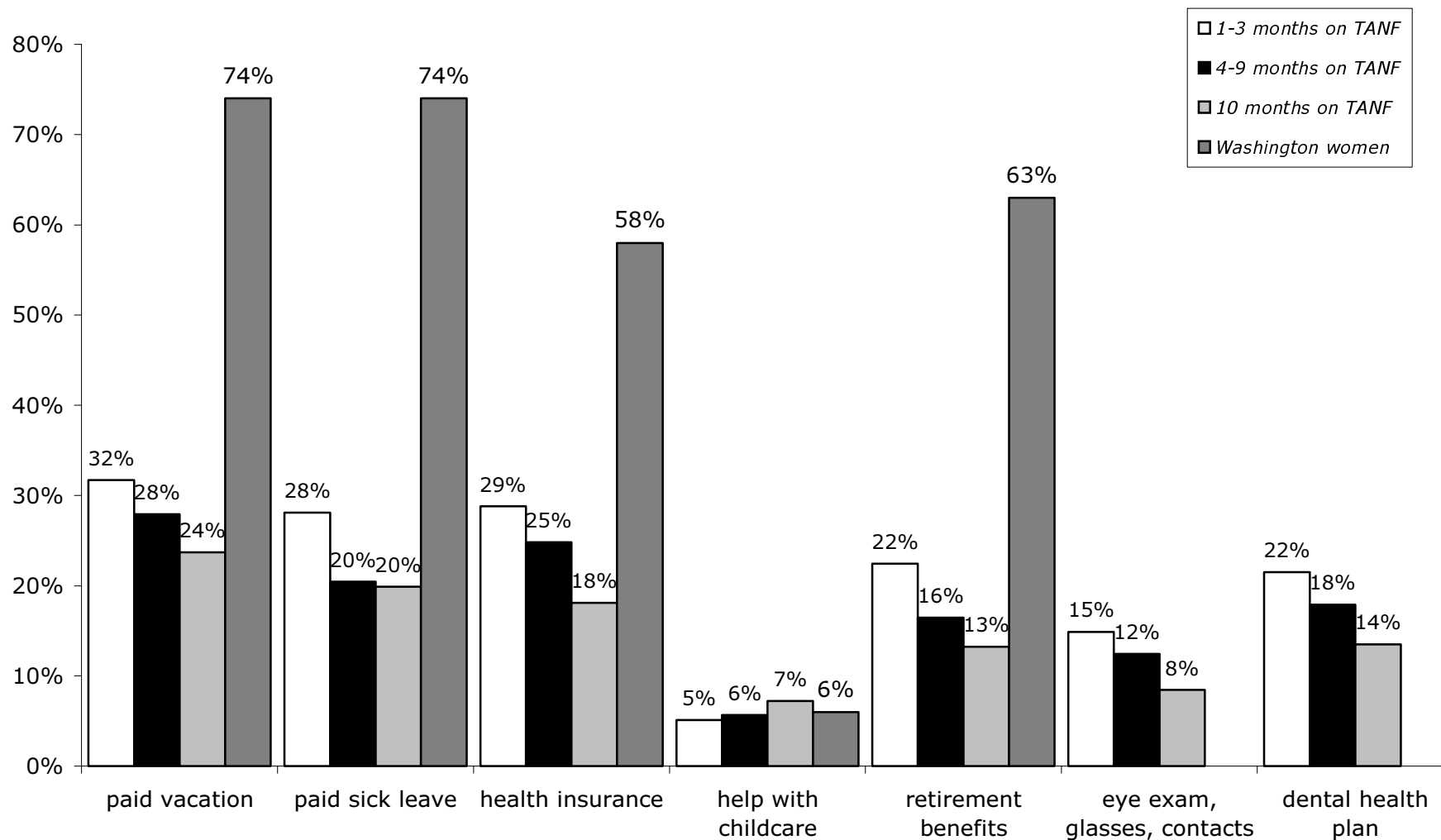
Wages, earned income tax credits, and child support payments are the most common sources of non-TANF income.



multiple responses are possible

Employer Provided Benefits

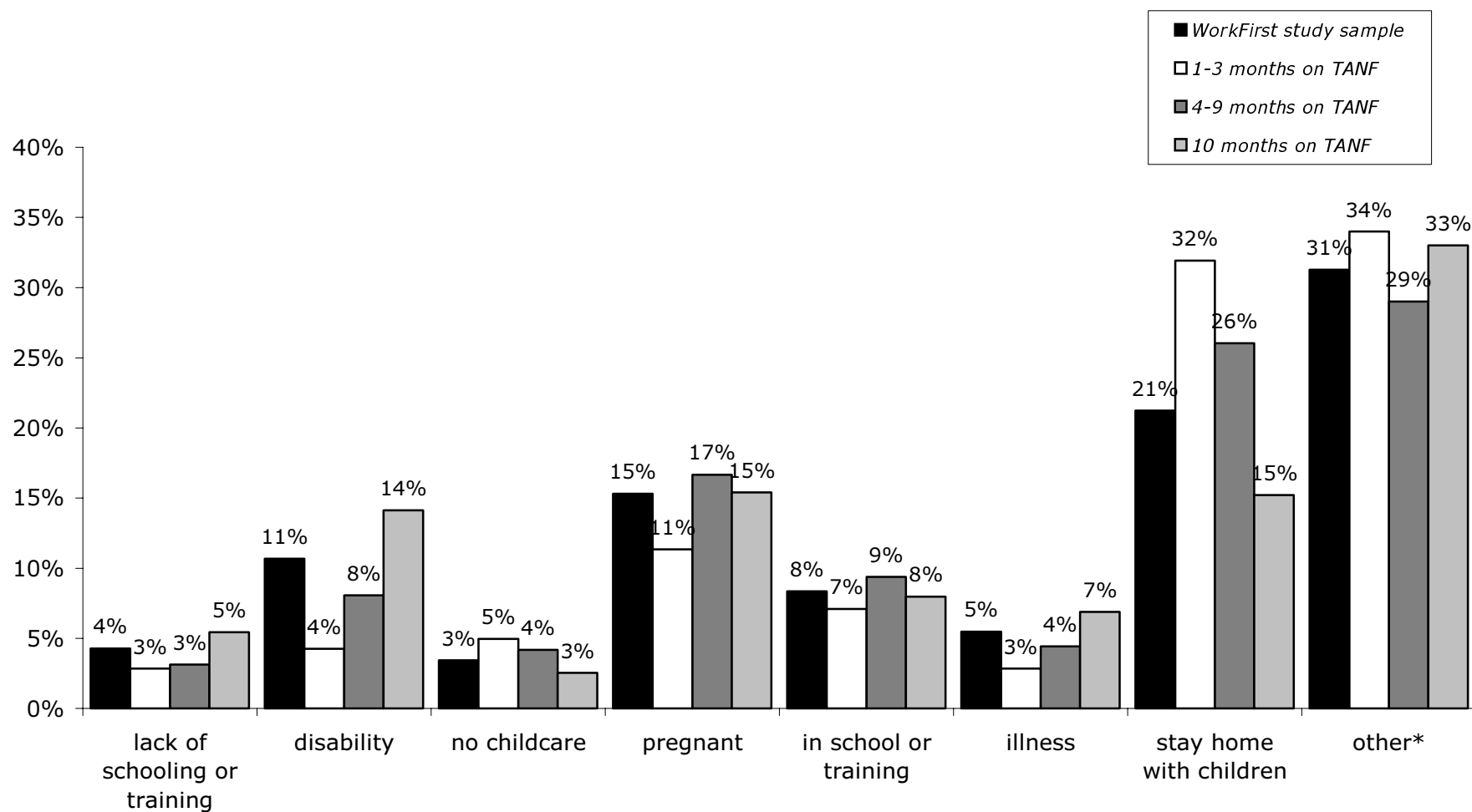
TANF recipients get far fewer benefits from their employers than do women in the general population. Over 86% of WorkFirst study families receive Medicaid benefits (see page 20).



multiple responses are possible

Not Looking for Work

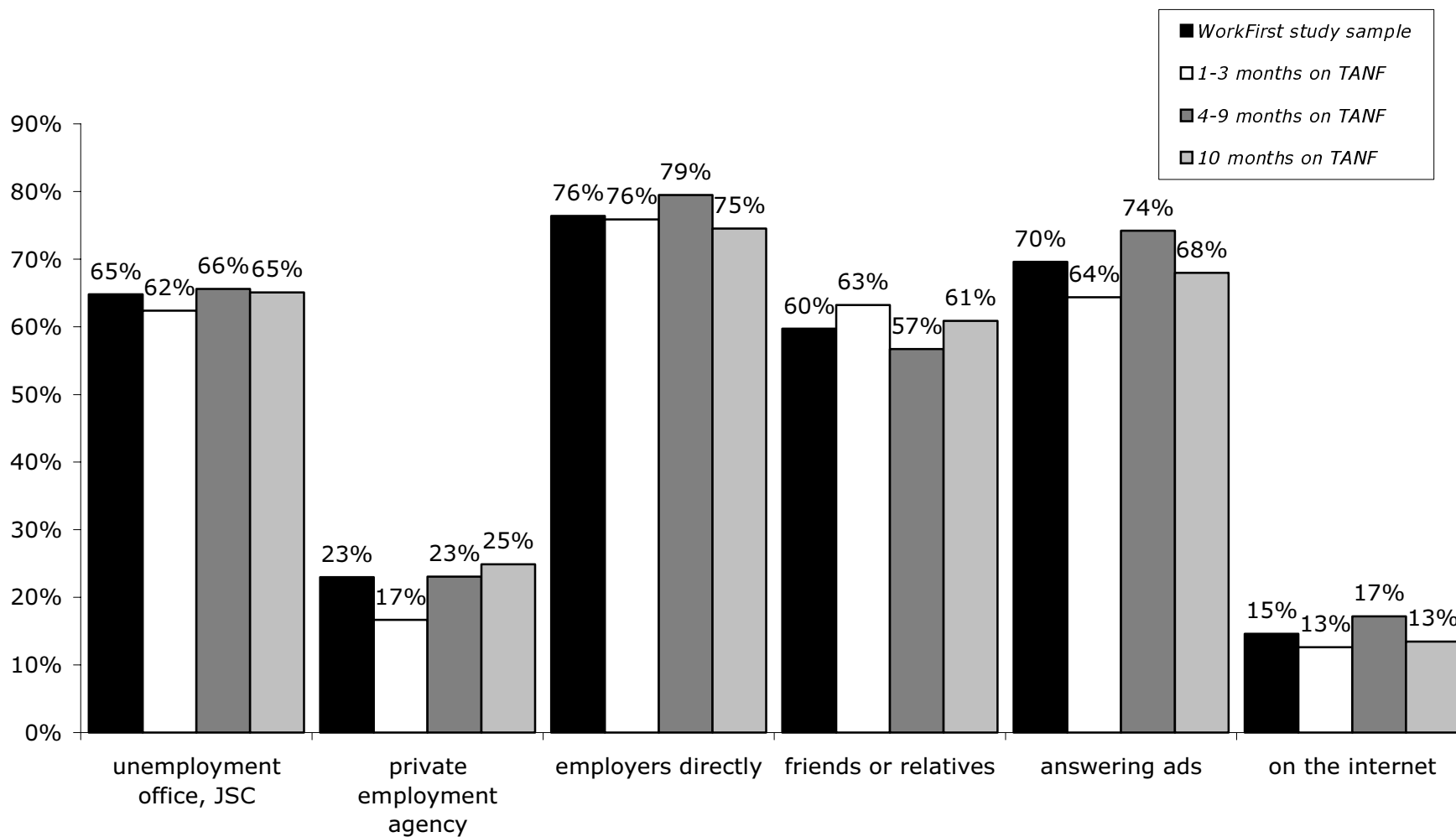
Reasons given by WorkFirst study respondents who were neither working nor actively looking for work.



* the large "other" category includes respondents who felt their limited English precluded them from looking for work, clients without transportation, and clients who were temporarily out of the state.

Job Search Resources

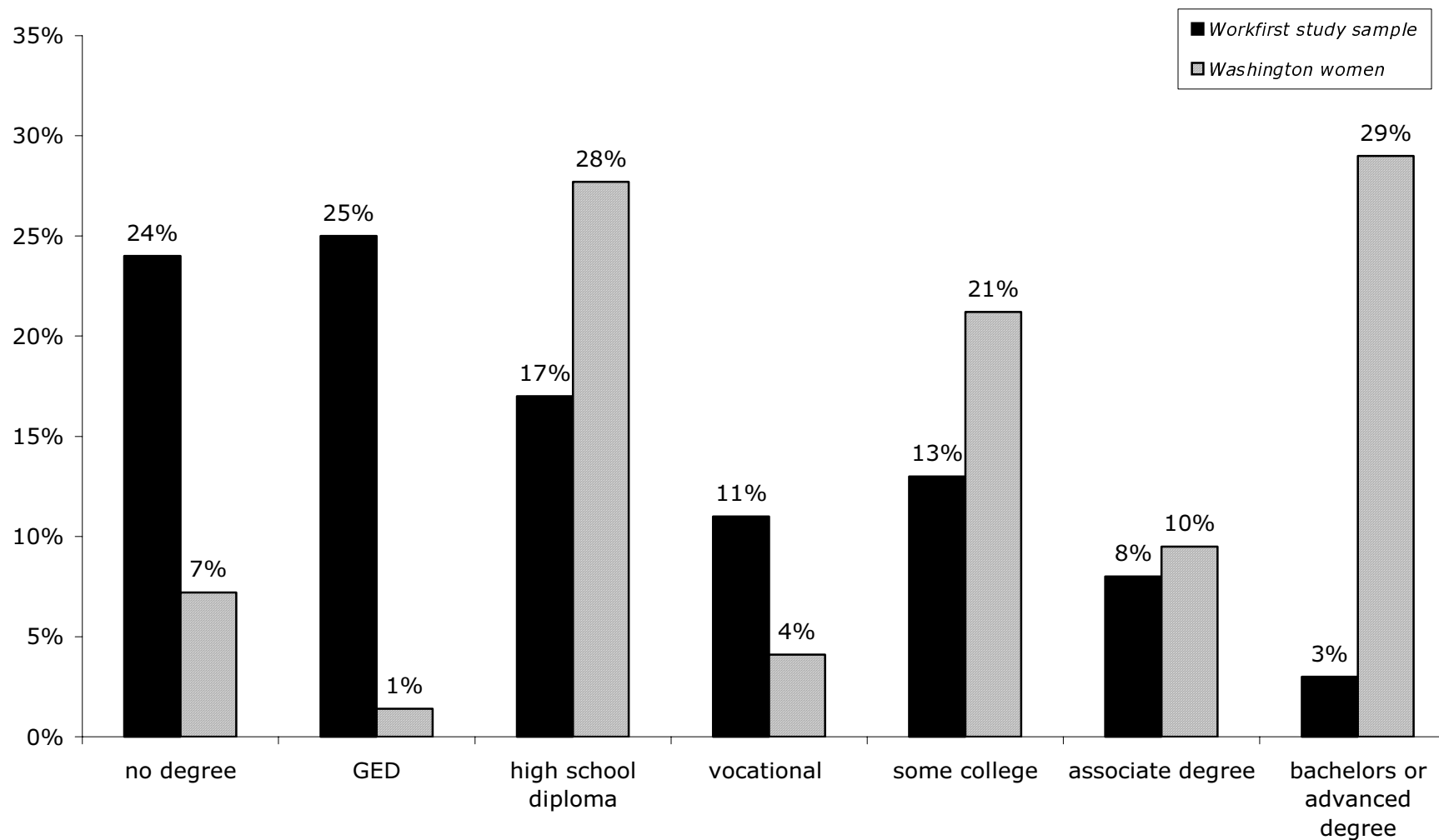
Most job-seekers use a variety of sources to look for work.



EDUCATION & TRAINING

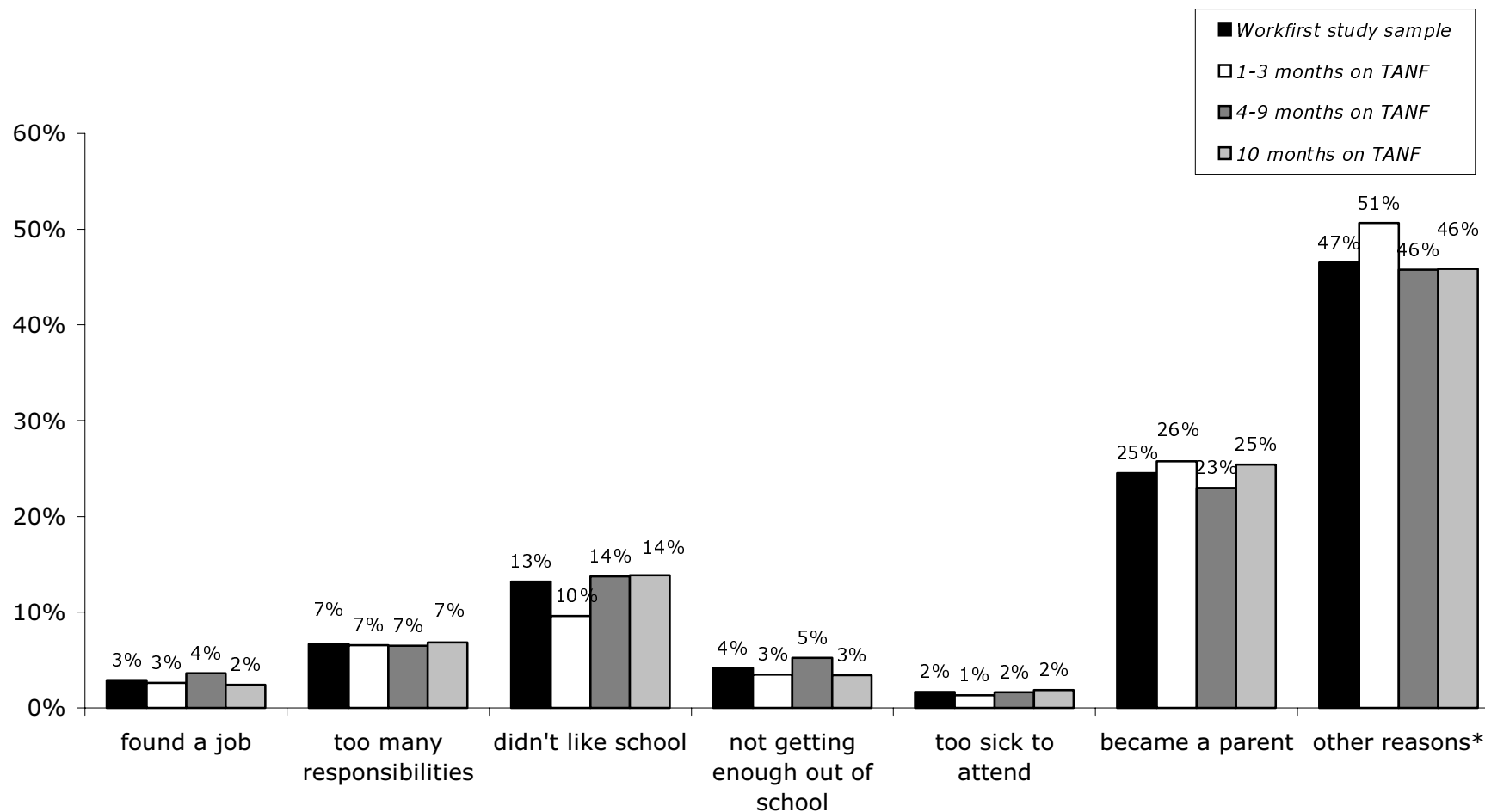
Education

Women on TANF have much lower levels of education than women in the general population.



Dropping Out of School

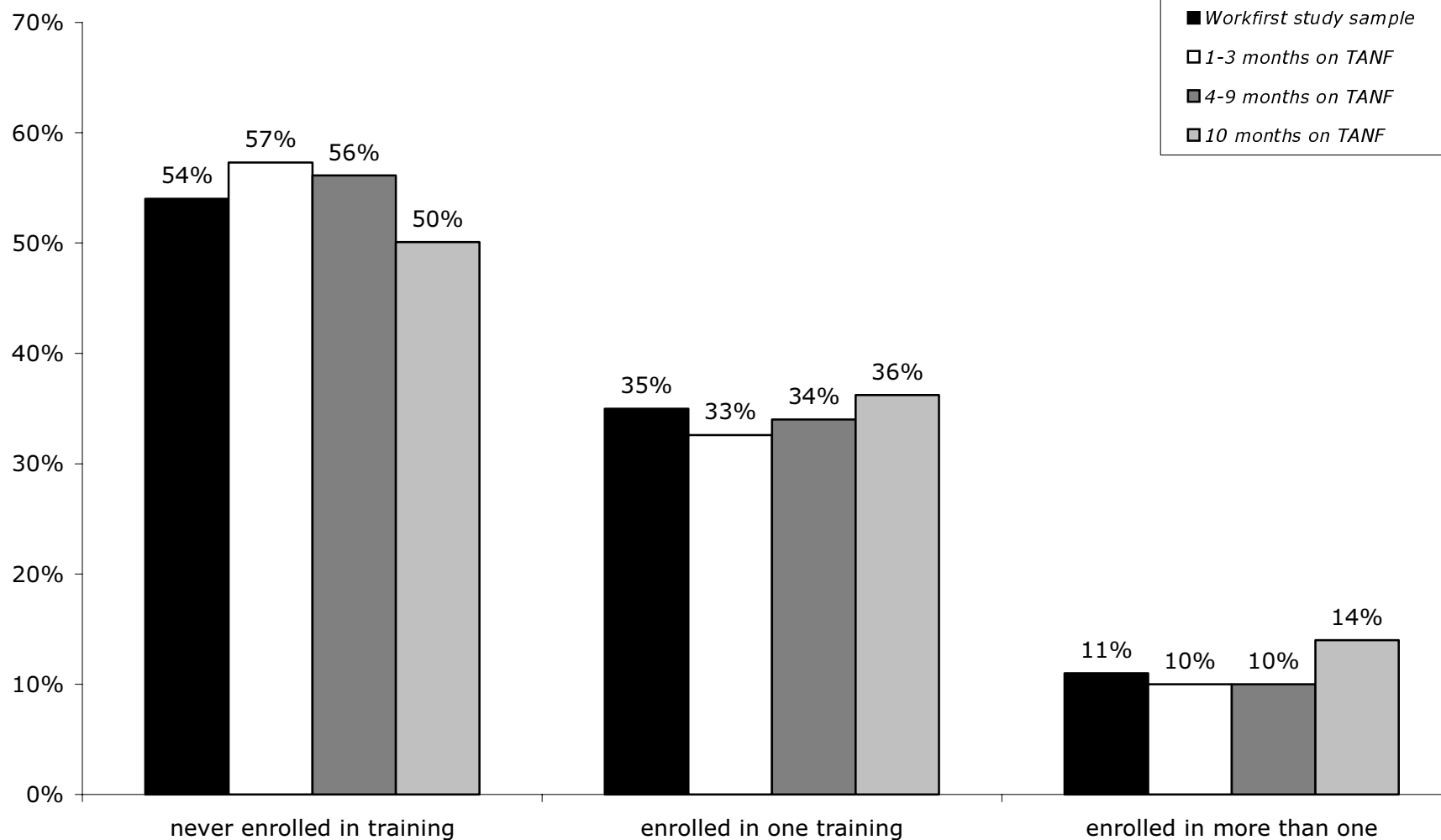
More recipients dropped out of high school because they became parents than for any other reason.



* Other reasons included being required to work, pregnancy with unknown outcome, peer pressure, marriage, family move, family problems, drugs & alcohol, leaving home, parent pulling recipient out, expulsion, and learning disability.

Vocational/Technical Training

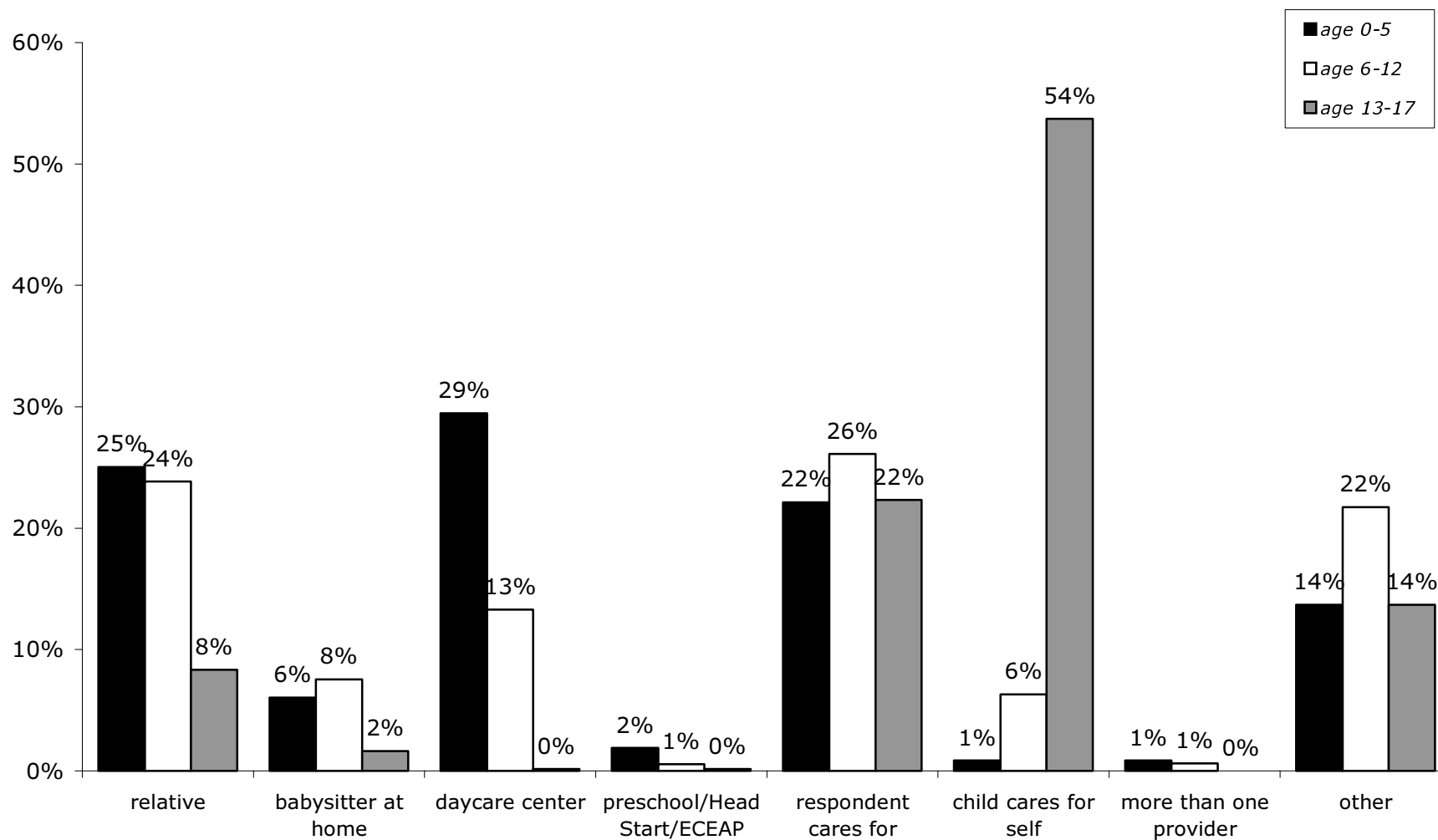
WorkFirst Study respondents who left TANF were *less* likely to have been in a vocational/technical training program while on WorkFirst.



CHILDCARE

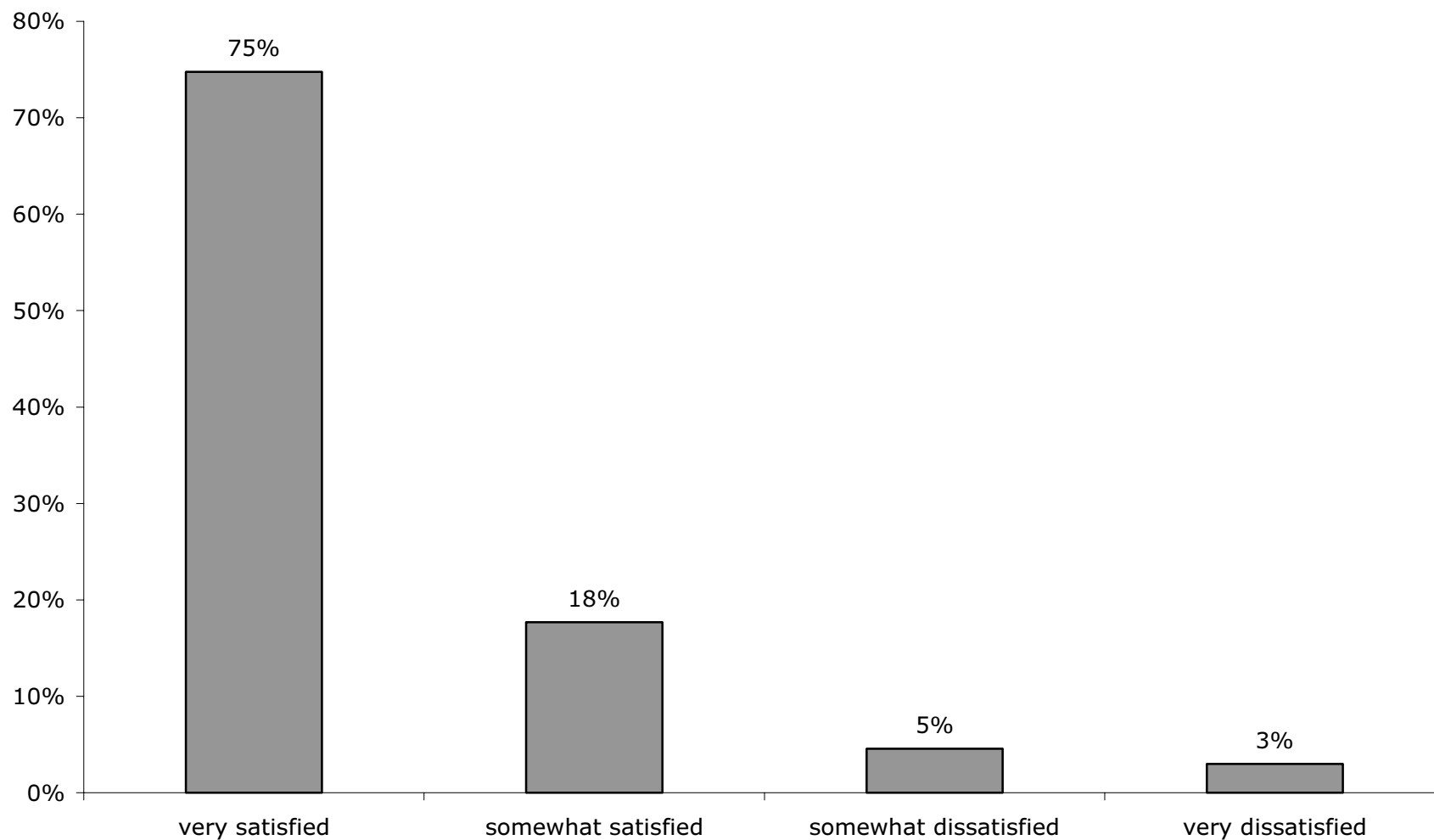
Childcare Arrangements

Most recipients use relatives as caregivers or they themselves care for their children. Children under five are most likely to be in daycare centers. (Data are for fall childcare arrangements.)



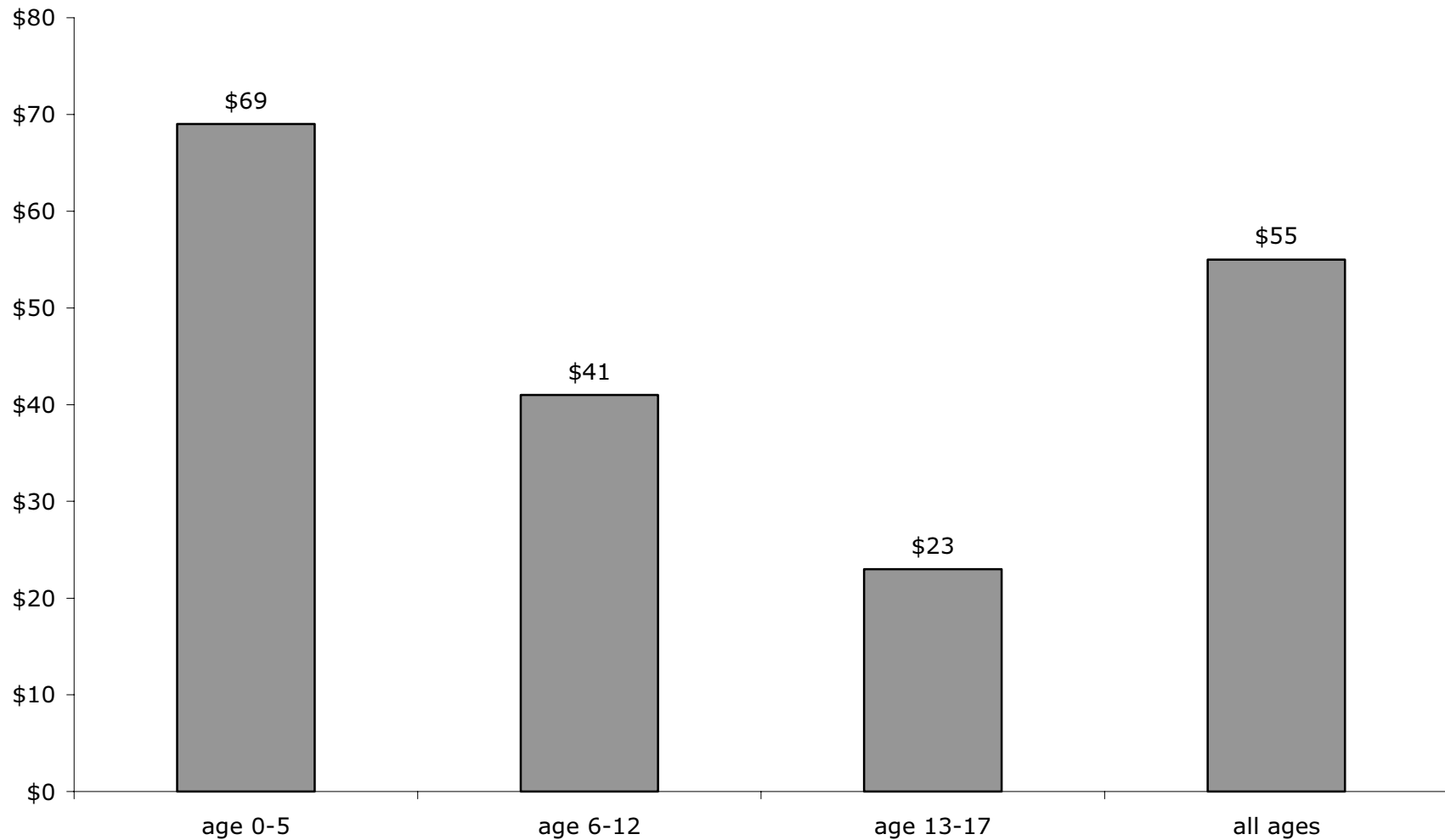
Satisfaction with Childcare

Three-quarters of WorkFirst participants are very



Childcare Costs

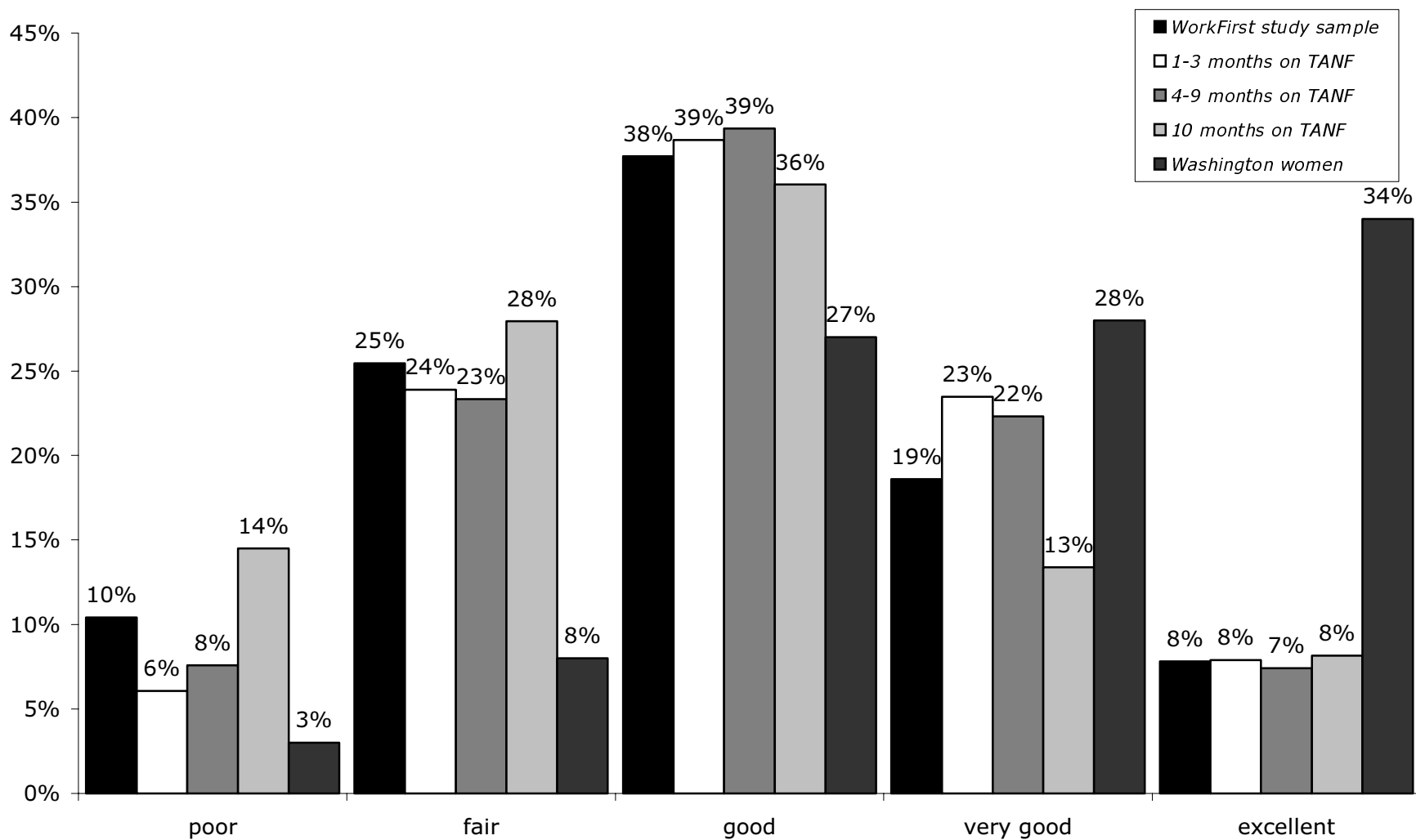
Recipients pay about \$55 per month for care of their children, paying more for younger children. (Approximately two-thirds of respondents receive a DSHS childcare subsidy.)



HEALTH & WELL-BEING

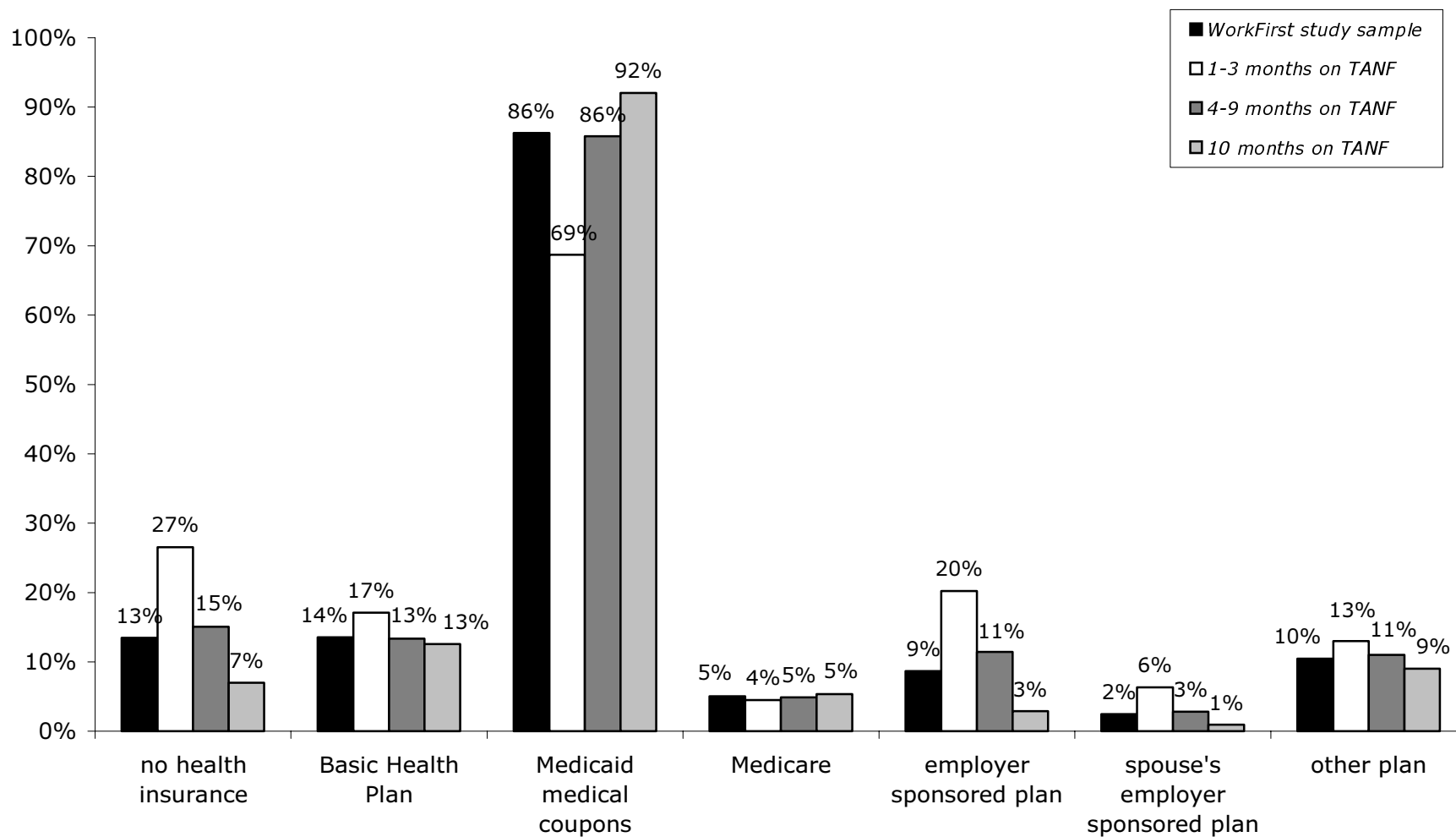
Health Status

Recipients generally report that they are in good health, but women who have been on TANF longer report worse health than others.



Health Insurance

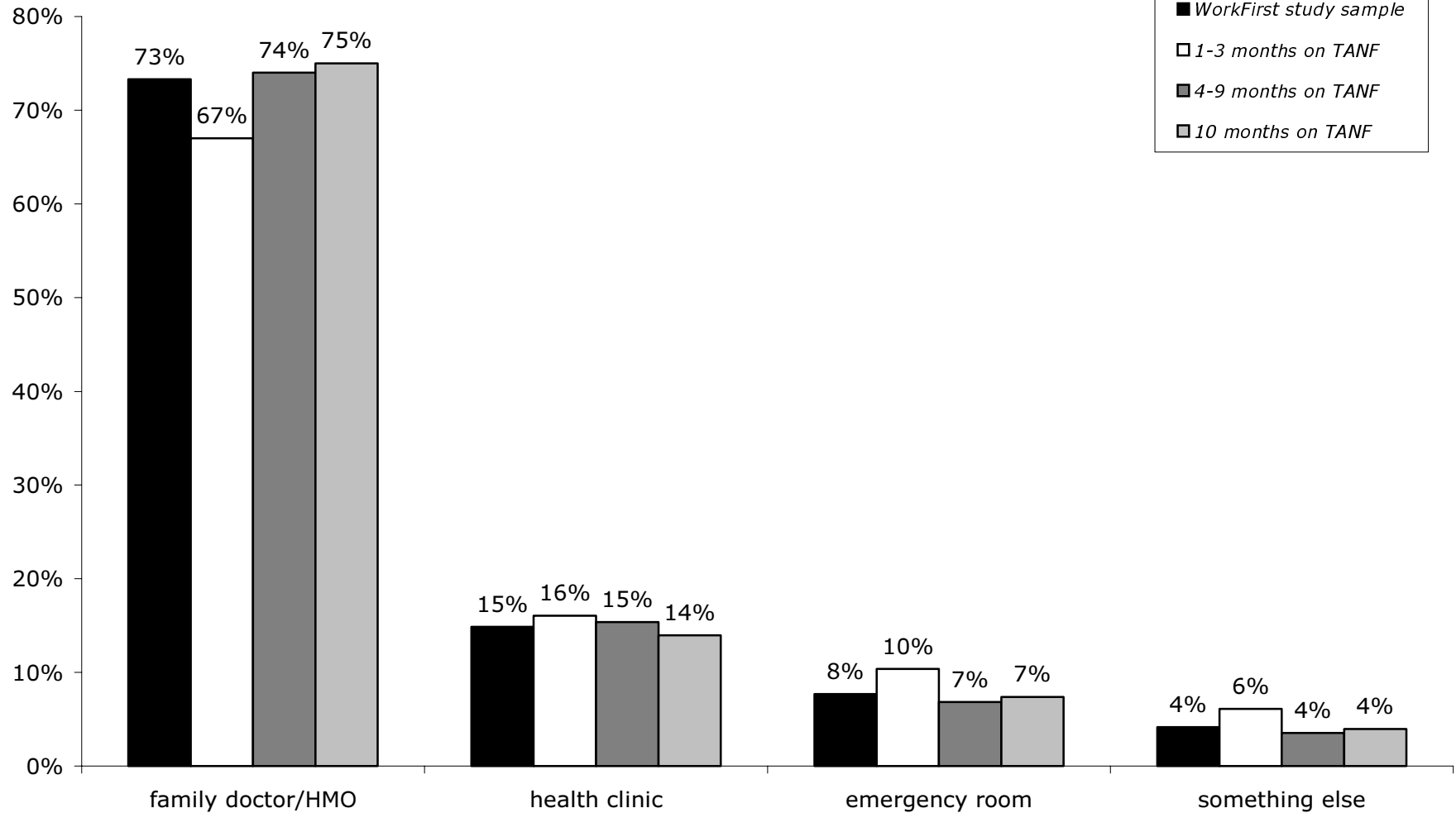
Most WorkFirst participants use Medicaid for their health insurance.



multiple responses are possible

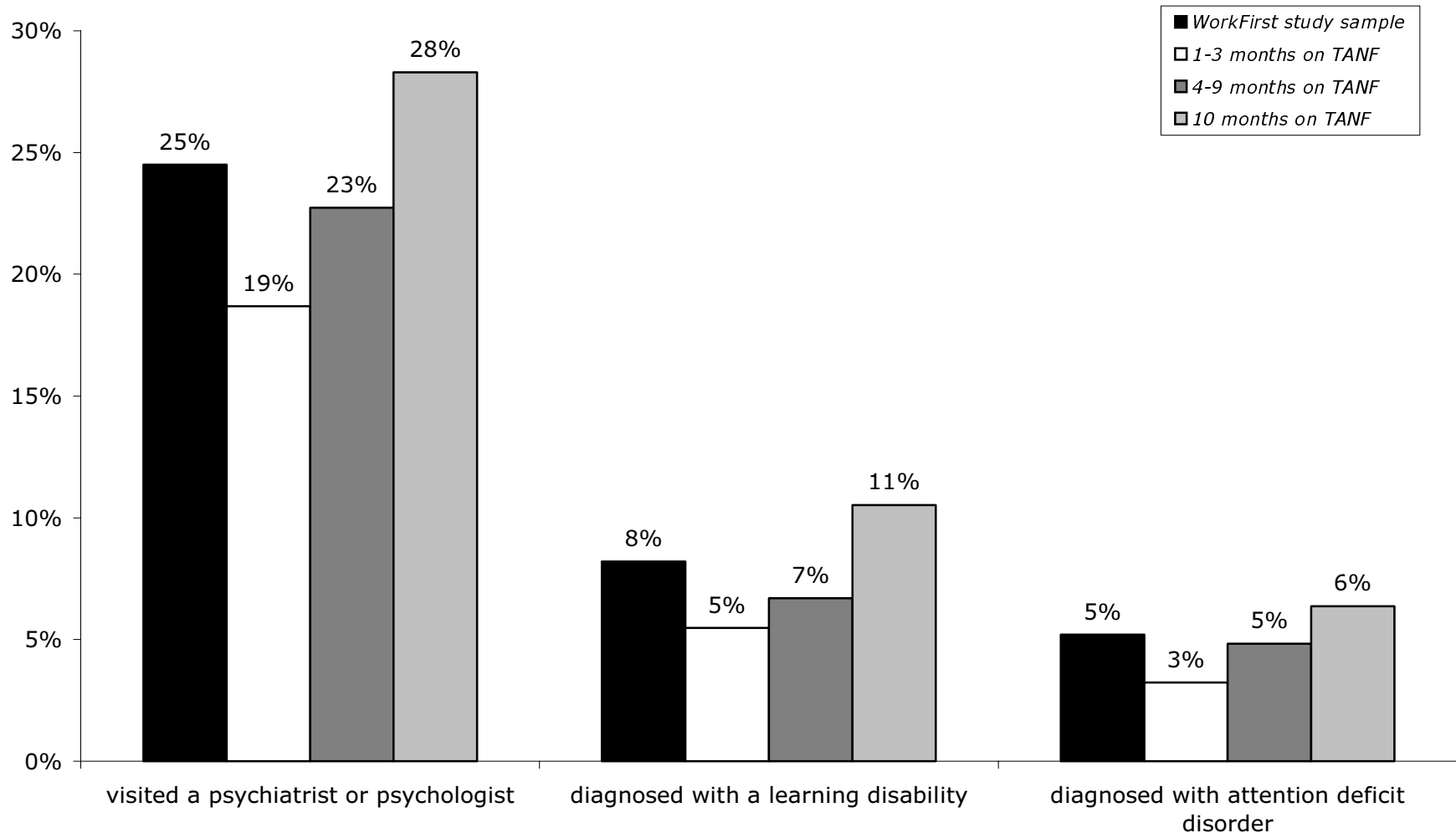
Health Care Provision

Most recipients go to a family doctor or an HMO primary care doctor when they are sick.



Mental Health

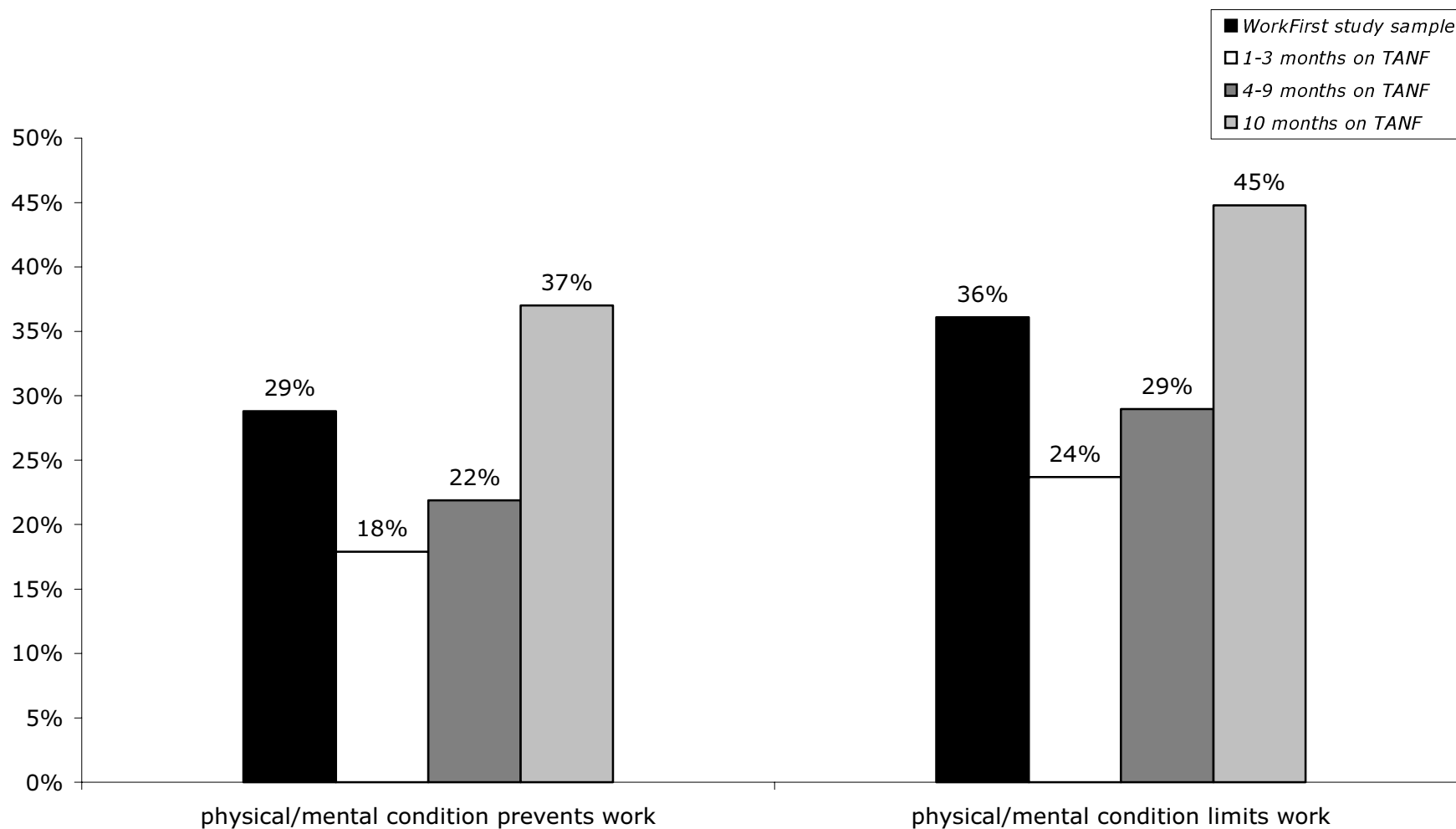
A large number of recipients have some history of mental health problems.
Among women who have been on TANF longer, these are more common.



multiple responses are possible

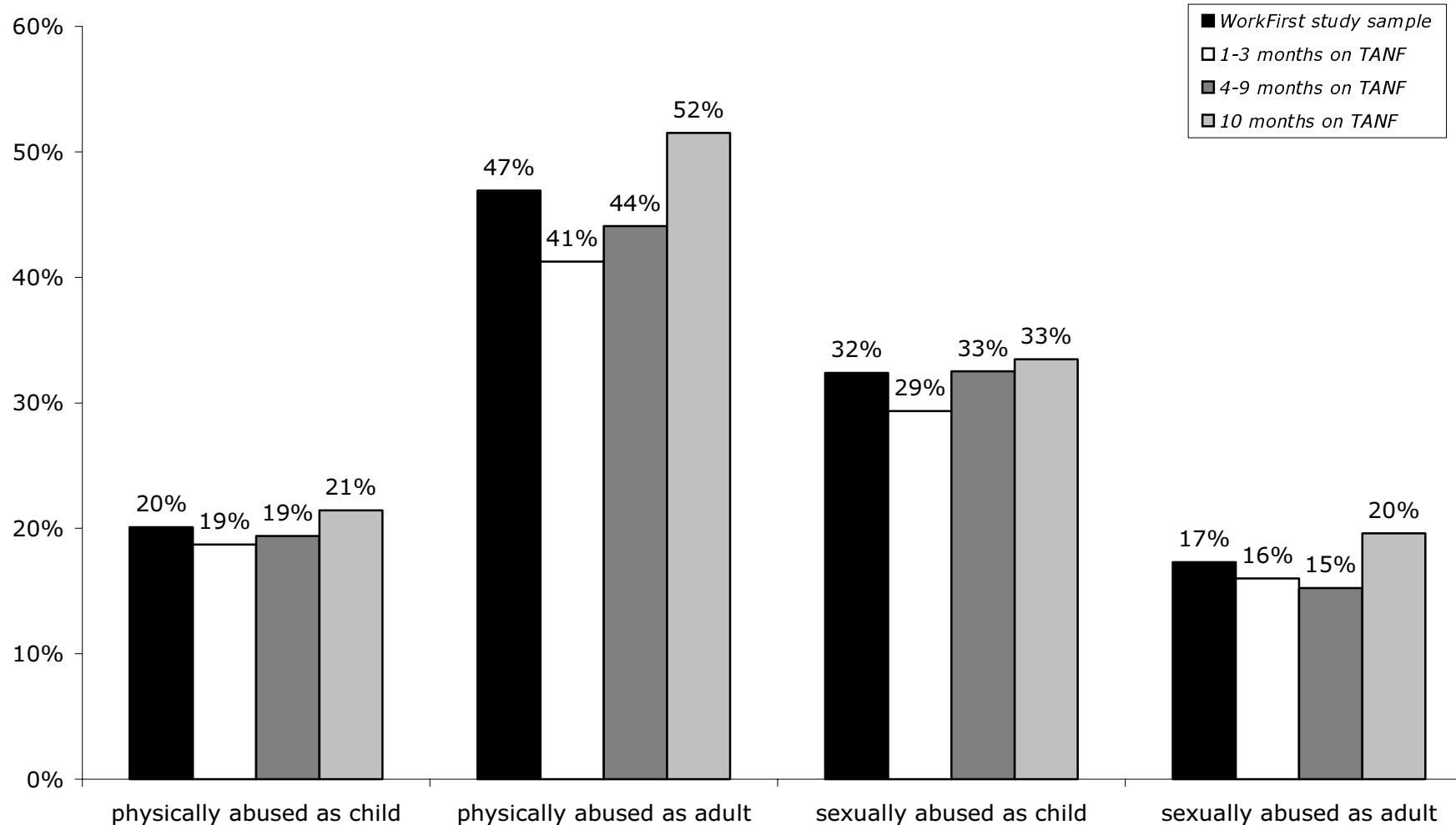
Work Limitations

Almost one-third of TANF recipients are in some way limited in their work by a physical or mental condition. This is more common among women who have received TANF longer.



Domestic Violence

Many WorkFirst clients have suffered from domestic violence, either as children or adults.

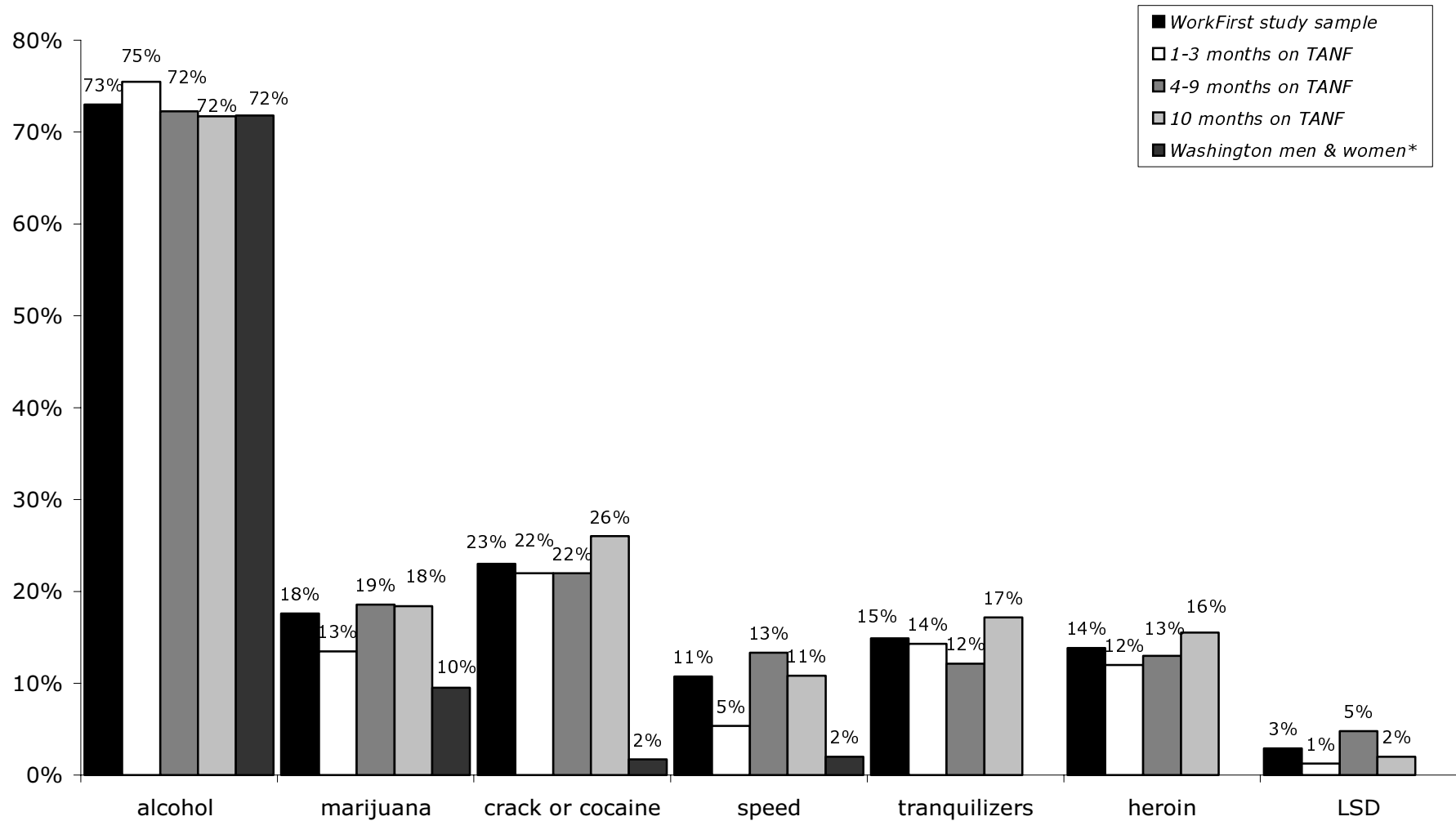


multiple responses are possible

Recent Drug & Alcohol Use

While recipients' alcohol use mirrors the general population, illegal drug use was much higher among TANF participants.

(Chart indicates one or more use between July 1998 and March 1999.)

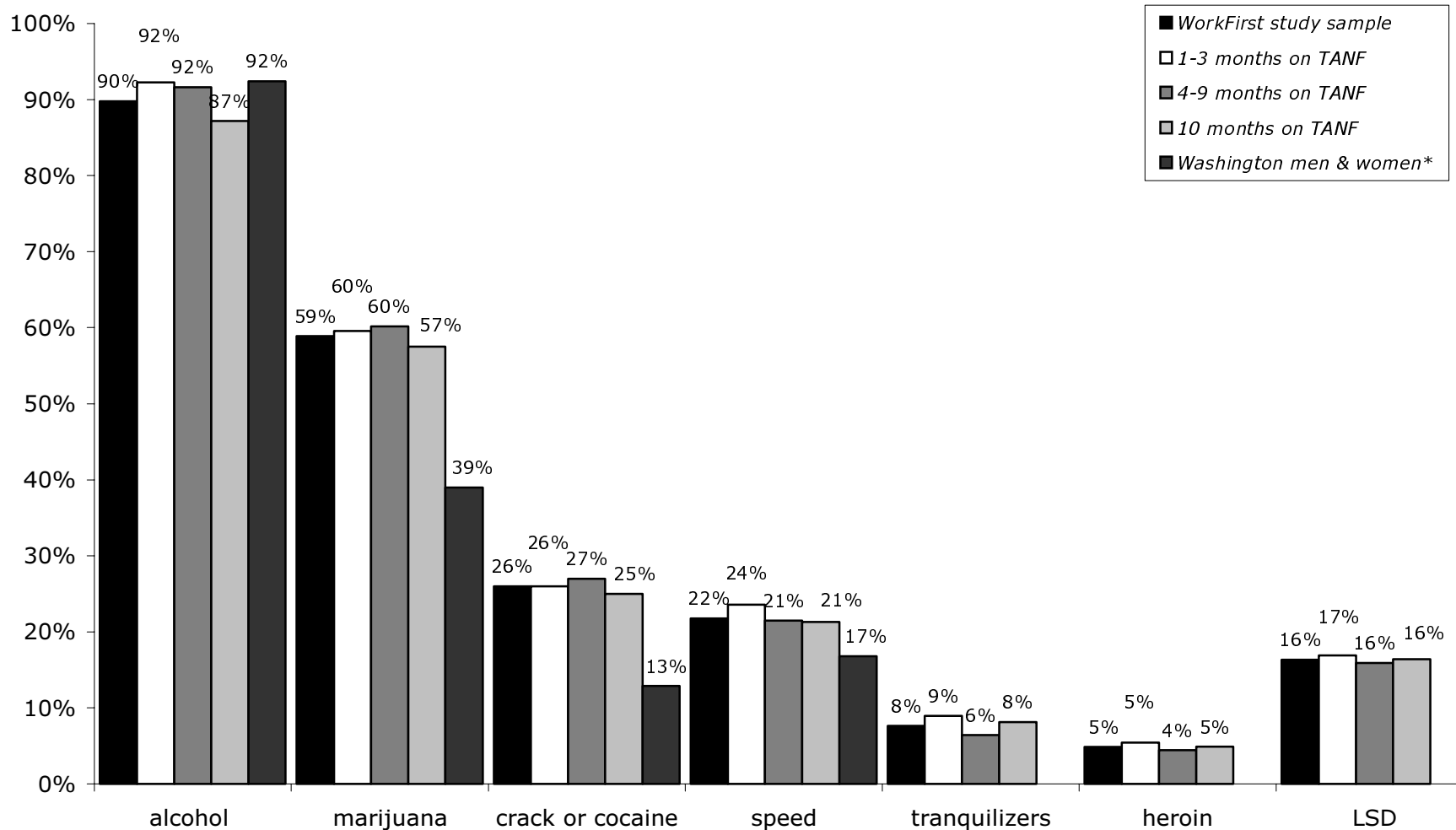


multiple responses are possible

* data (from DSHS DASA "Tobacco, Alcohol, and Other Drug Abuse Trends in Washington State; 2000 Report") are for both men and women, while study data include women only.

Drug & Alcohol History

Most participants have tried alcohol or marijuana, but most have never tried other illegal drugs. (Chart indicates that recipient has tried the substance in their lifetime.)



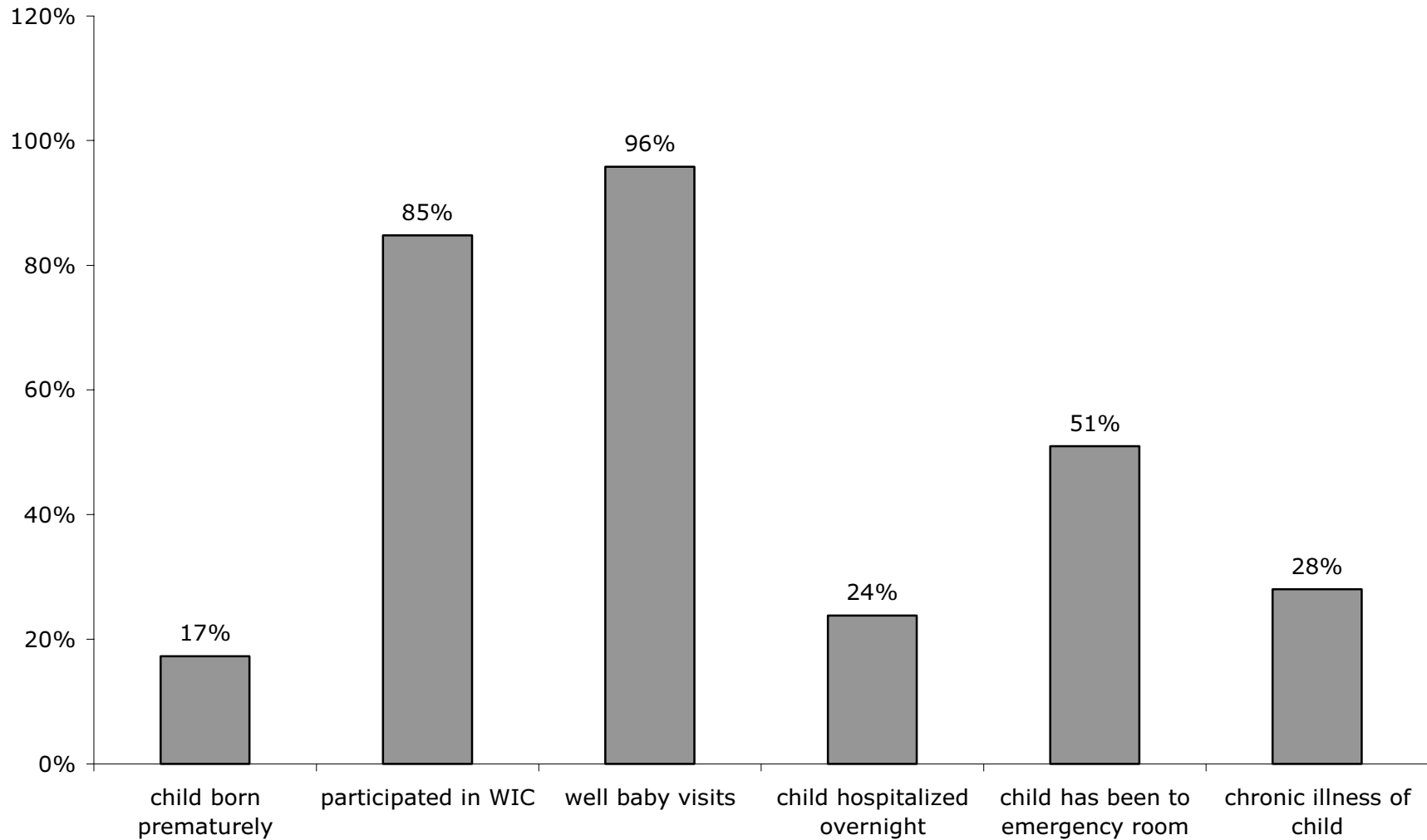
multiple responses are possible

* data (from DSHS DASA "Tobacco, Alcohol, and Other Drug Abuse Trends in Washington State; 2000 Report") are for both men and women, while study data include women only.

CHILDREN'S HEALTH & WELL-BEING

Children's Health

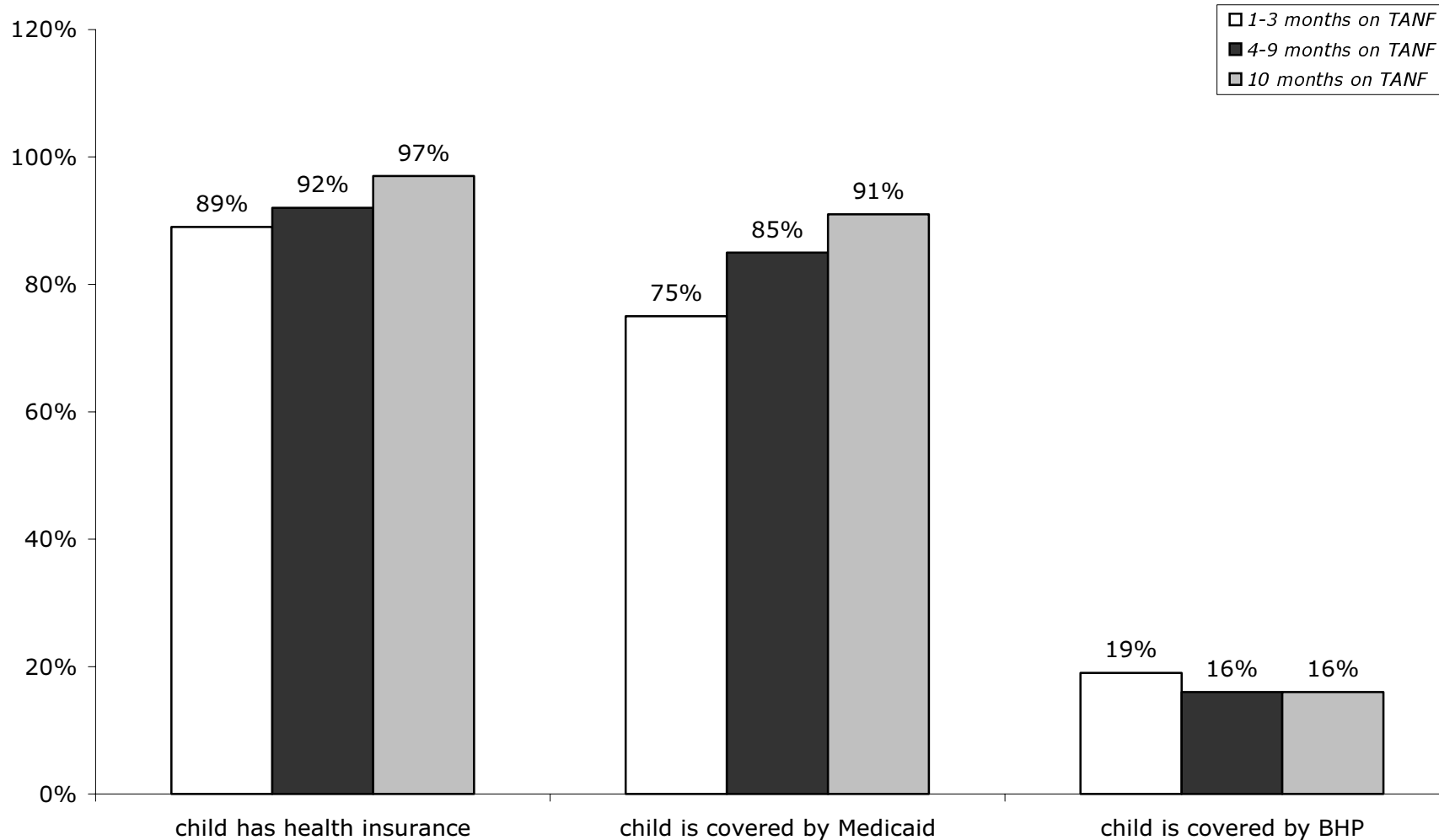
Indicators of potential health problems for recipients' youngest children.



multiple responses are possible

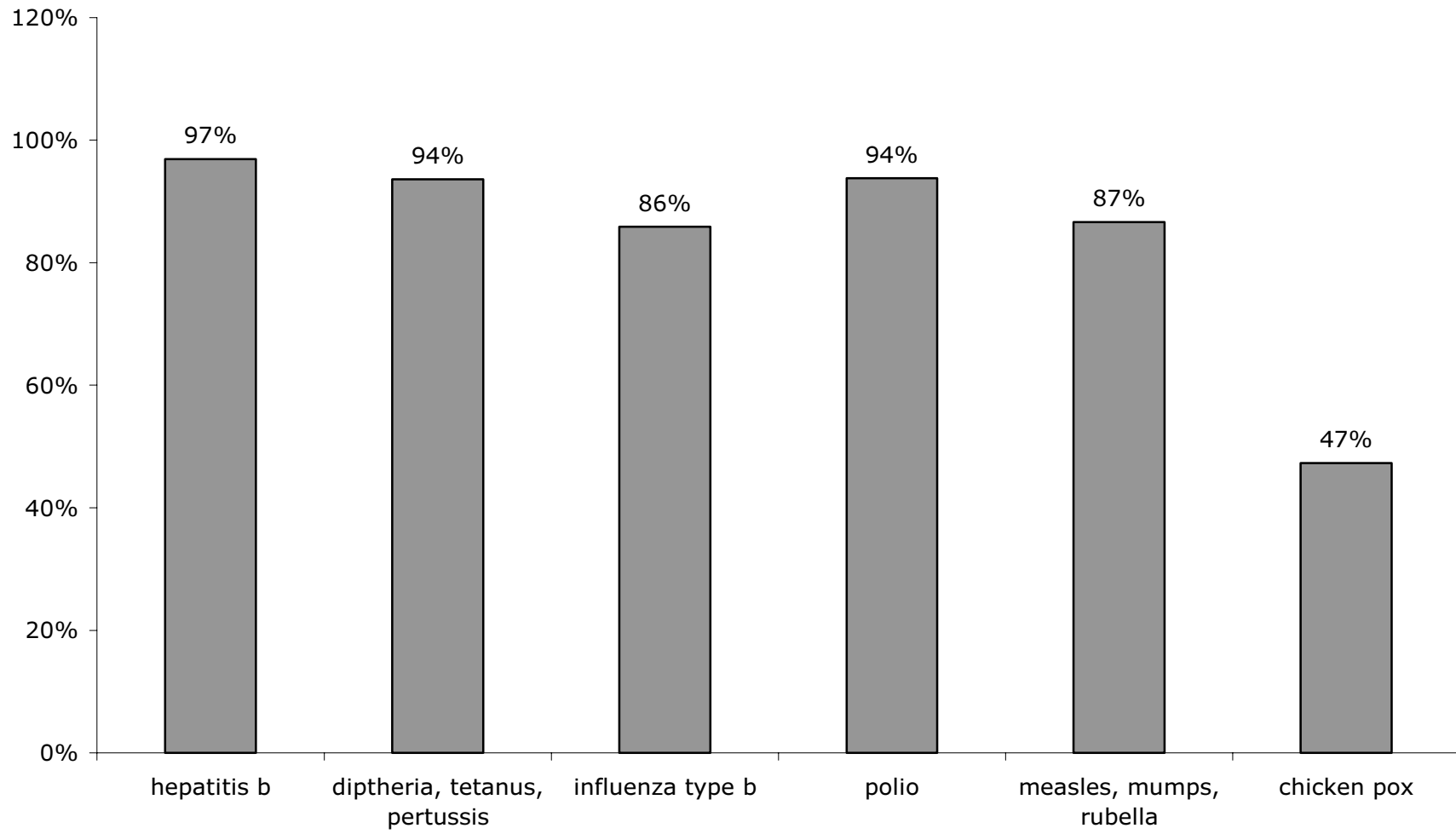
Children's Health Insurance

Nine out of ten children of participants have some form of health insurance, the most common being Medicaid. (Data represents the youngest child between the ages of 5 and 17 in each family.)



Childhood Vaccinations

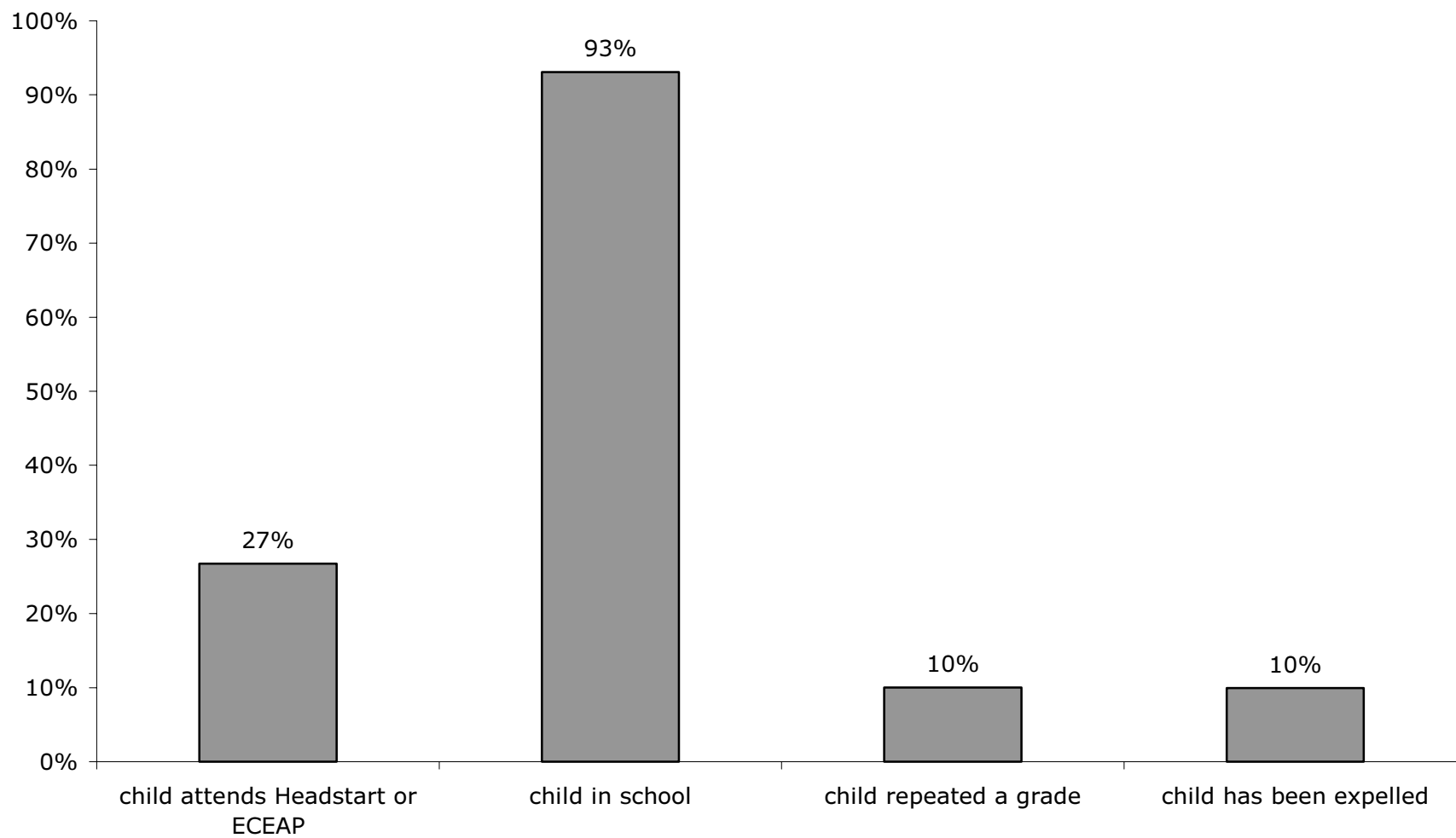
**Almost all clients' children receive the recommended childhood vaccinations.
(Data represents the youngest child between the ages of 5 and 17 in each family.)**



multiple responses are possible

Children's Behaviors

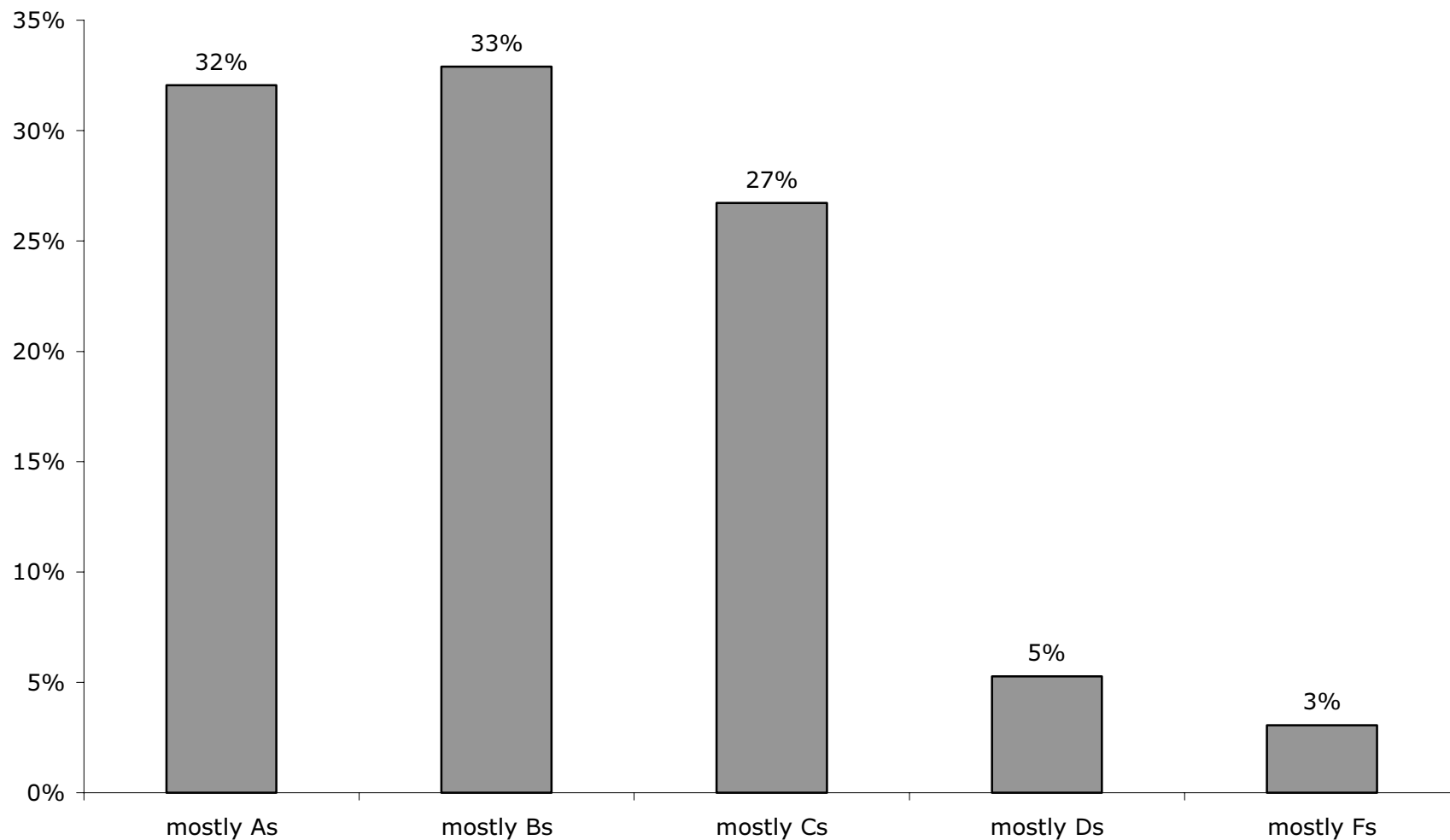
Few grade-school age children of WorkFirst participants have been expelled or have had to repeat a grade. (Data represents the youngest child between the ages of 5 and 17 in each family.)



multiple responses are possible

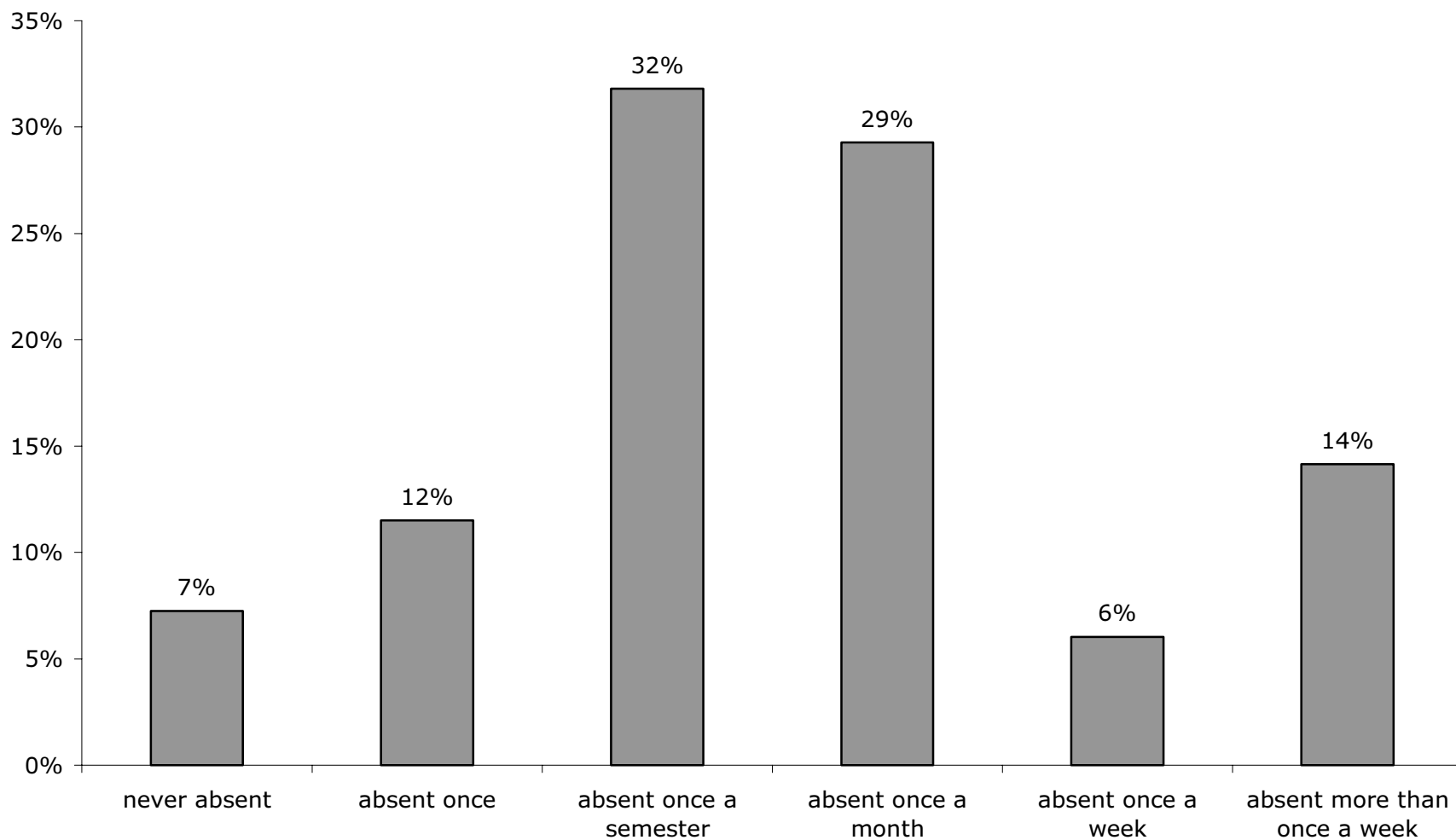
School Performance

TANF clients report their youngest children perform well academically. (Data represents the youngest child between the ages of 5 and 17 in each family.)



School Attendance

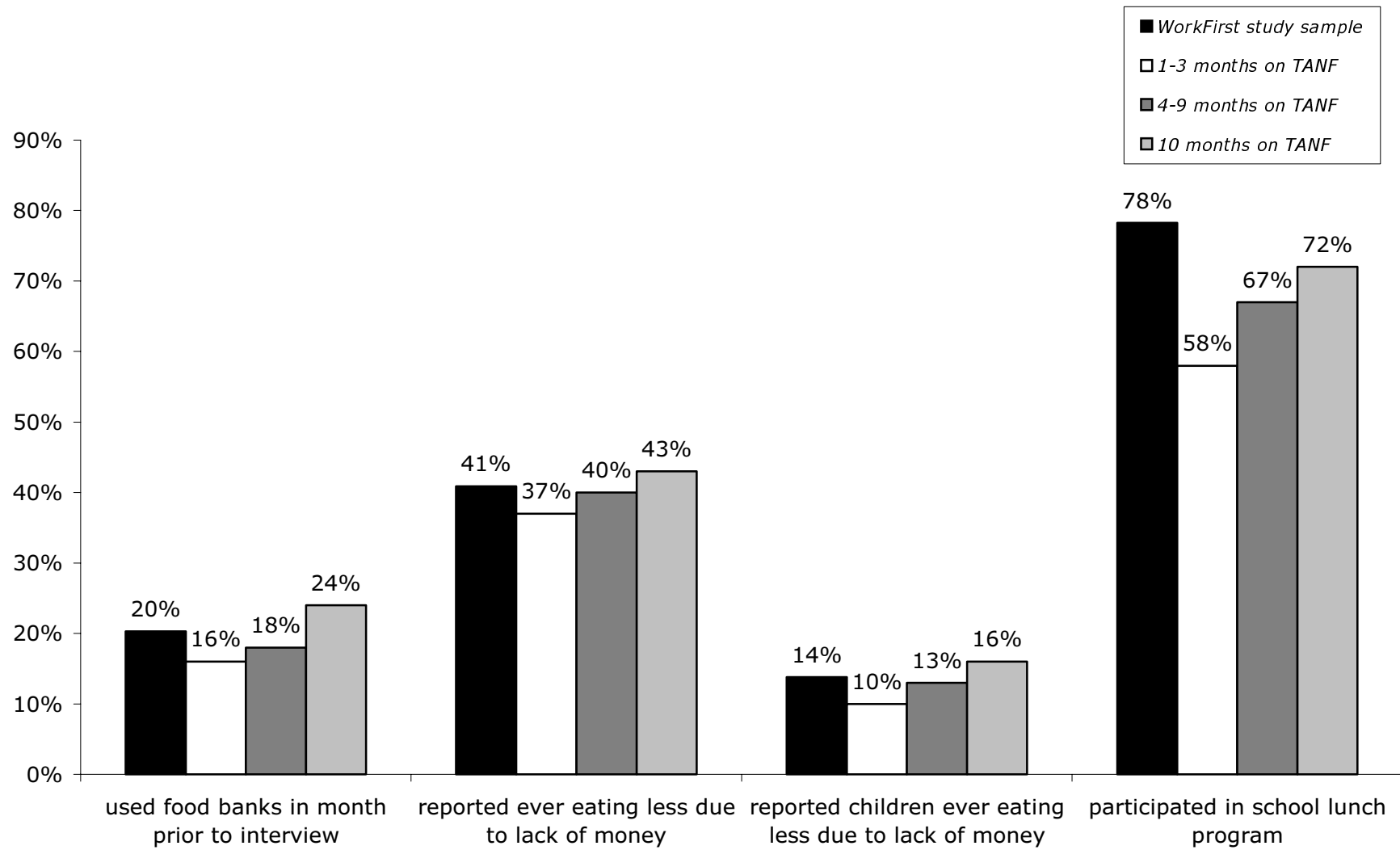
**Most recipients' children are absent from school once a month or less often.
(Data represents the youngest child between the ages of 5 and 17 in each family.)**



HUNGER & HOUSING

Hunger Indicators

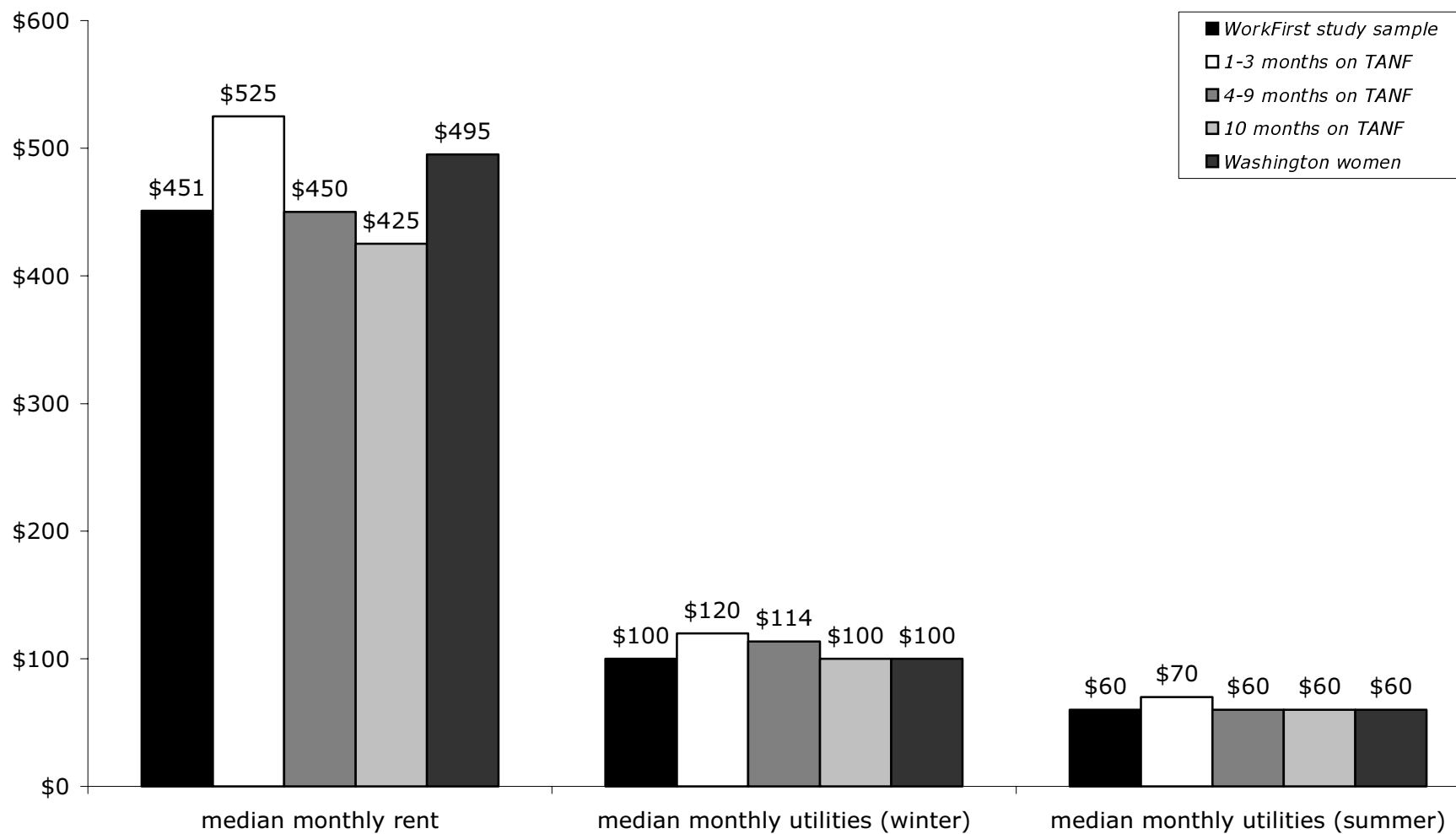
Many WorkFirst participants were at some point unable to afford all the food their families needed.



multiple responses are possible

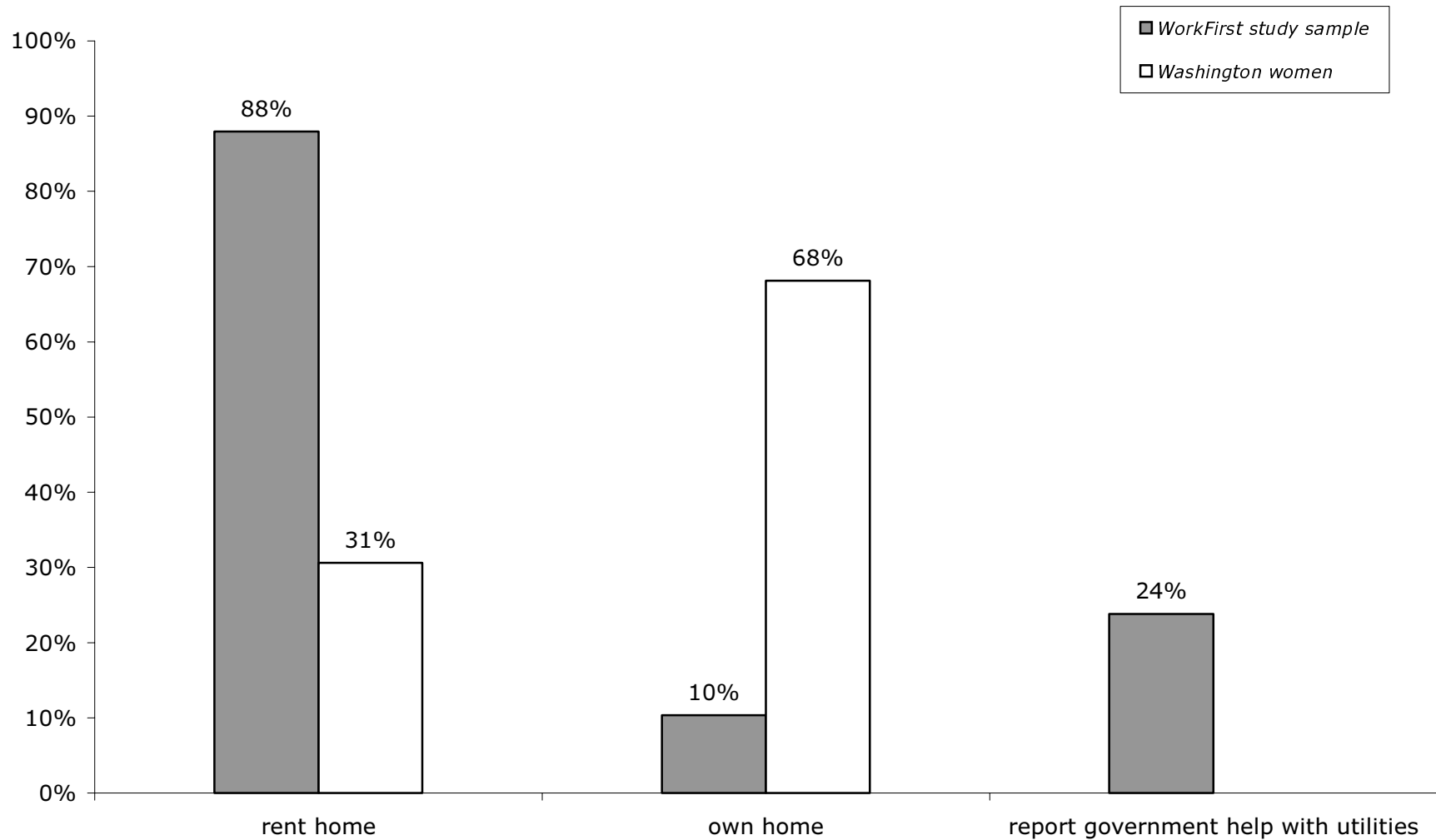
Housing Costs

WorkFirst clients pay about the same rent as other women in Washington.



Housing Status

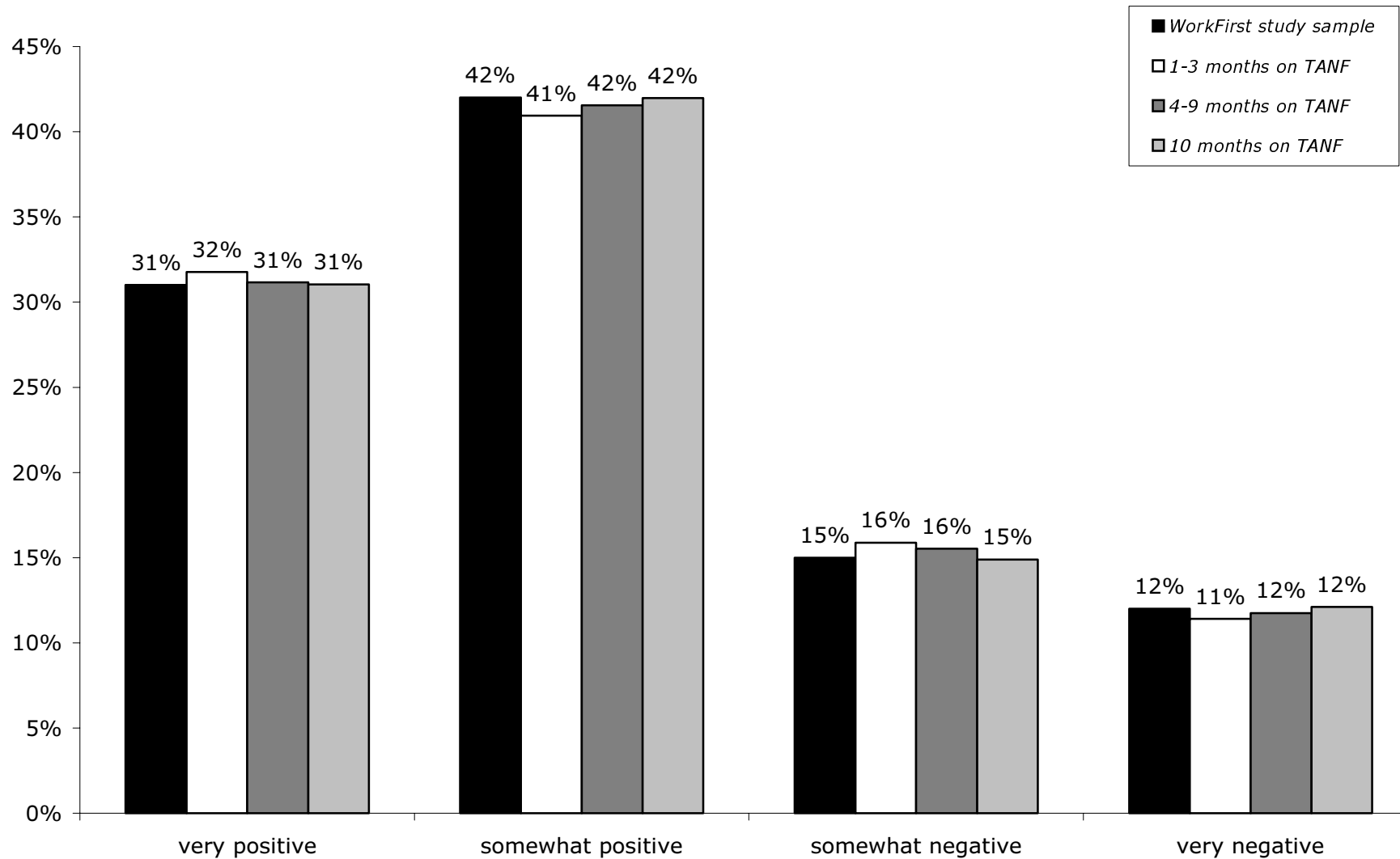
Most recipients rent their homes. Nearly a quarter receive public assistance with utilities.



IMPRESSIONS OF WORKFIRST

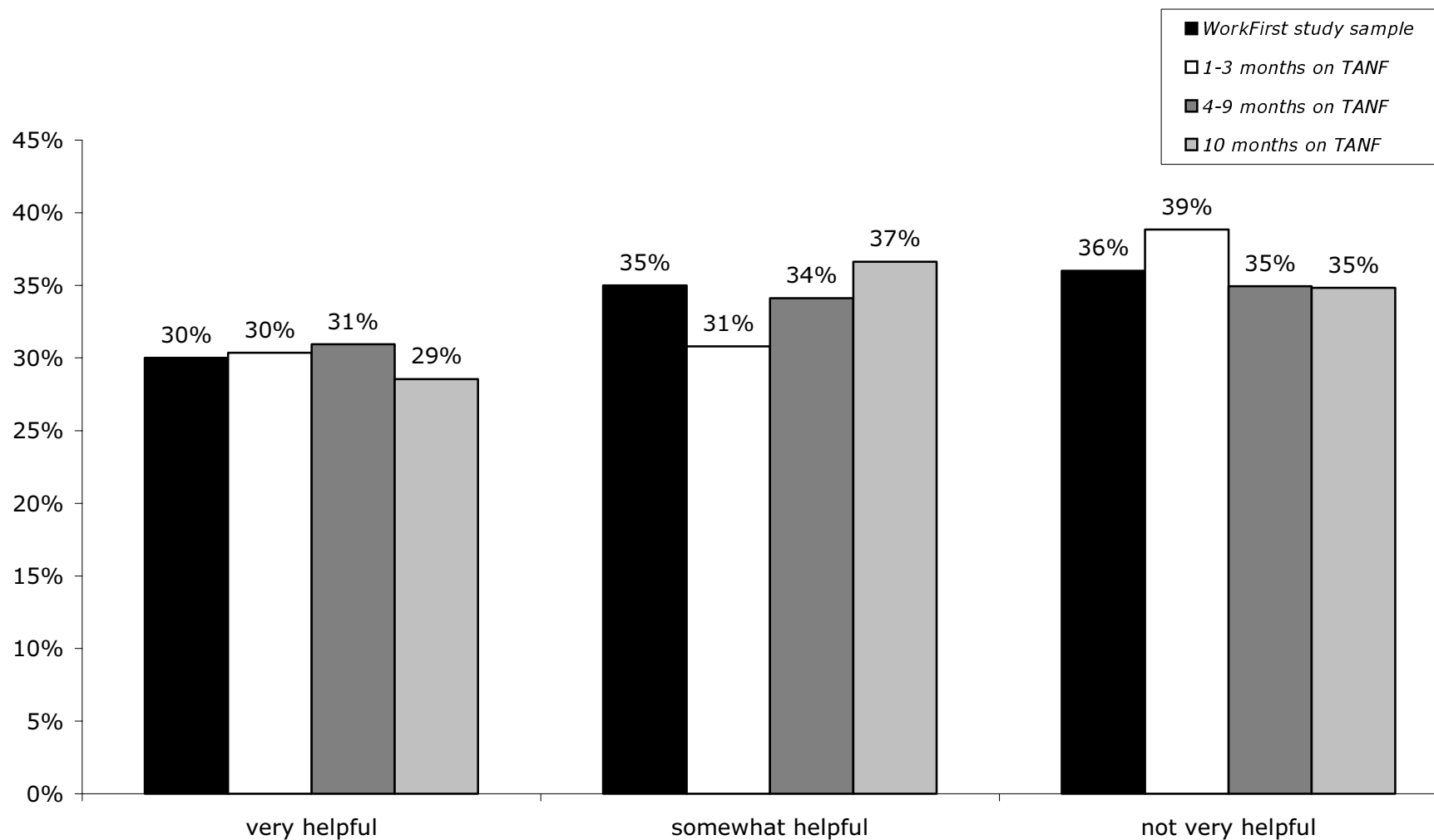
WorkFirst Impressions

Most WorkFirst participants have a positive impression of the WorkFirst program overall.



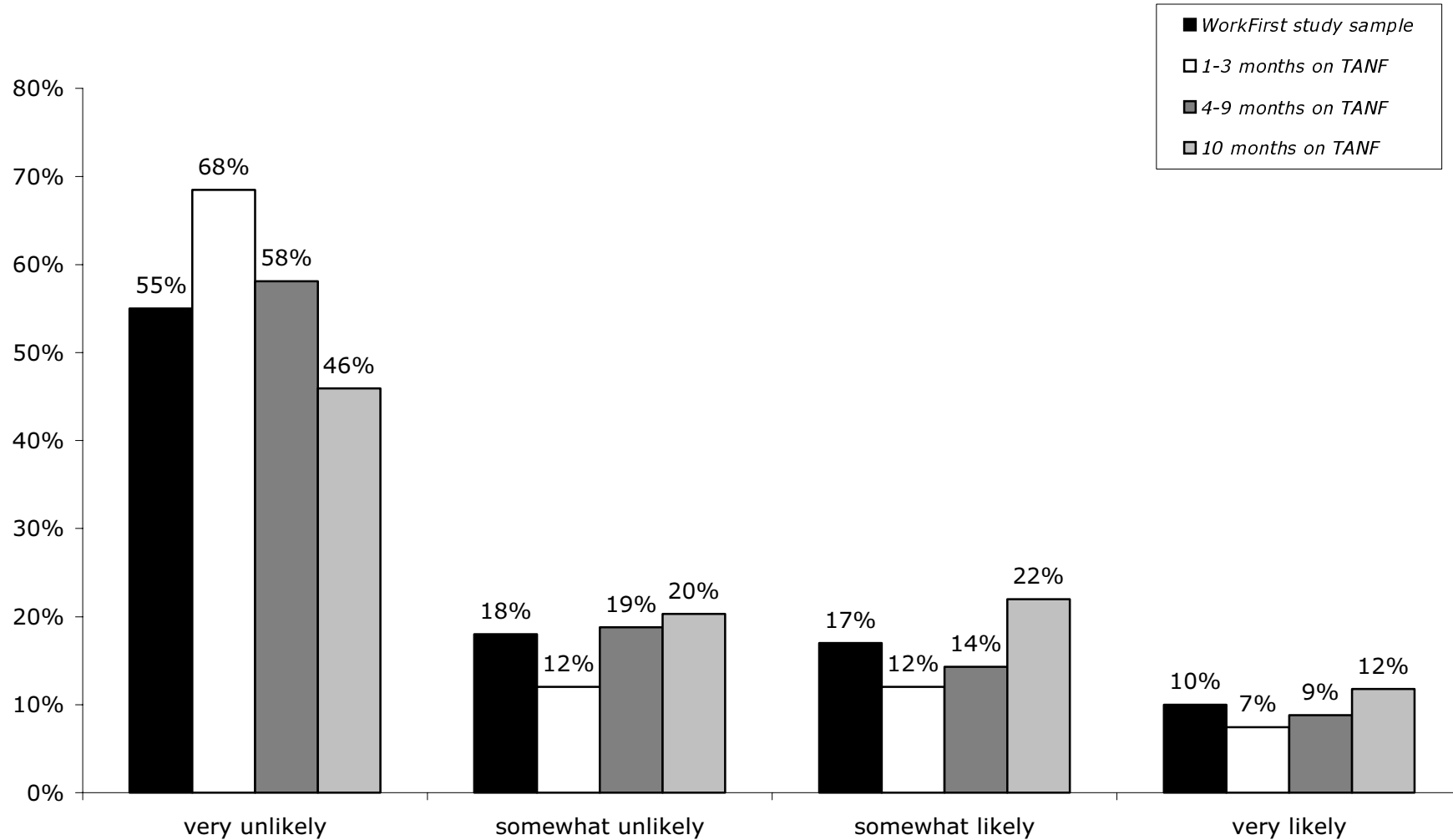
Moving Towards Self-Sufficiency

Just under one-third of TANF recipients report WorkFirst is very helpful in moving them towards self-sufficiency.



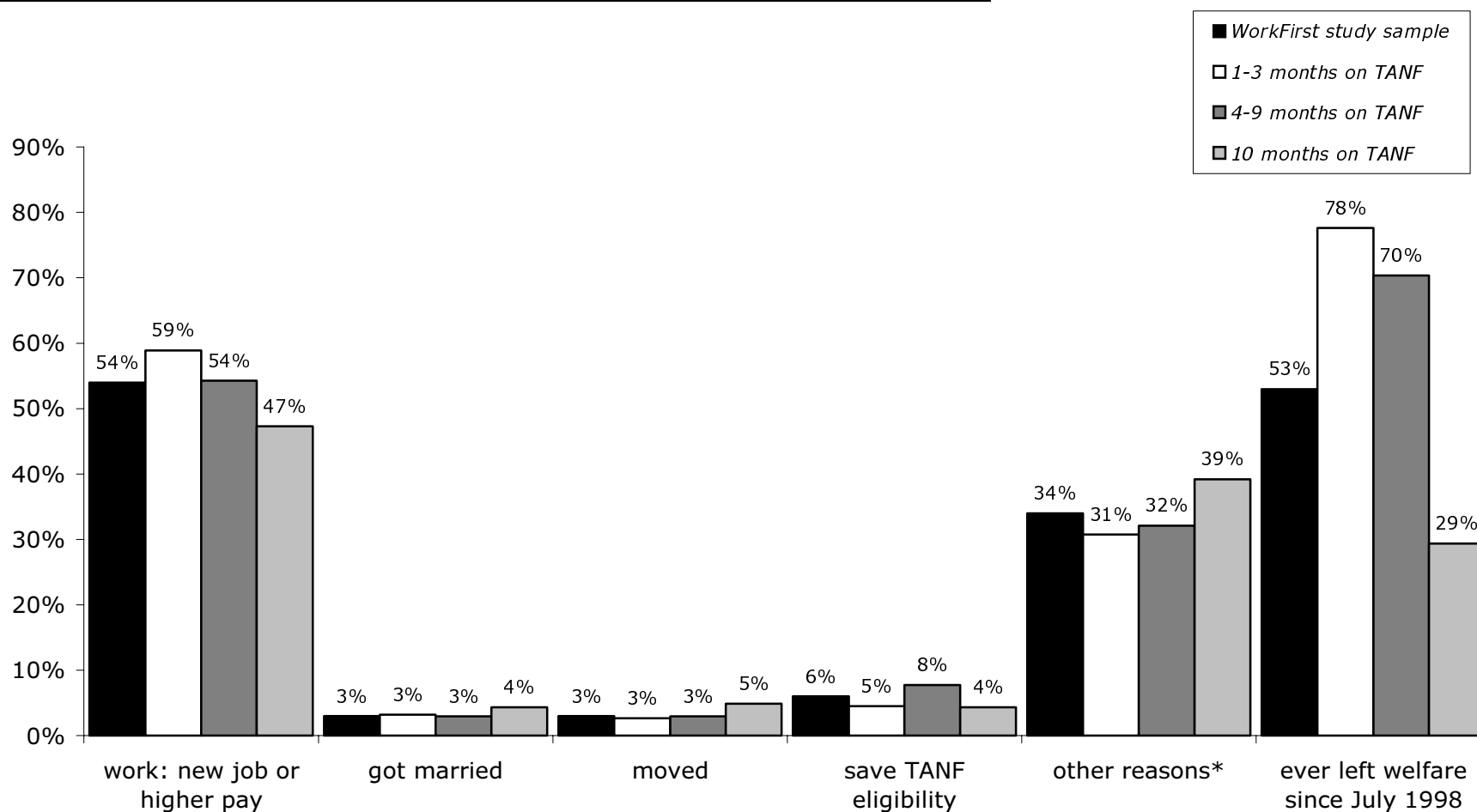
Future TANF Use

Most WorkFirst clients think it is very unlikely that they will be receiving TANF in twelve months; however, those who have received TANF continuously, consider it more likely than do other recipients.



Reasons for Leaving Welfare

Most clients leave TANF because of employment. Most recipients have not been on welfare continuously.



*Other reasons included income from another household member, termination, child support providing more income, personal preference, SSI income or pending, no children in household, preference for full-time school, and dissatisfaction with the program or caseworker.

GEOGRAPHY

Eastern rural: Adams, Asotin, Benton, Chelan, Columbia, Douglas, Ferry, Franklin, Garfield, Grant, Kittitas, Lincoln, Okanogan, Pend Orielle, Skamania, Stevens, Walla Walla, Whitman, and Yakima Counties

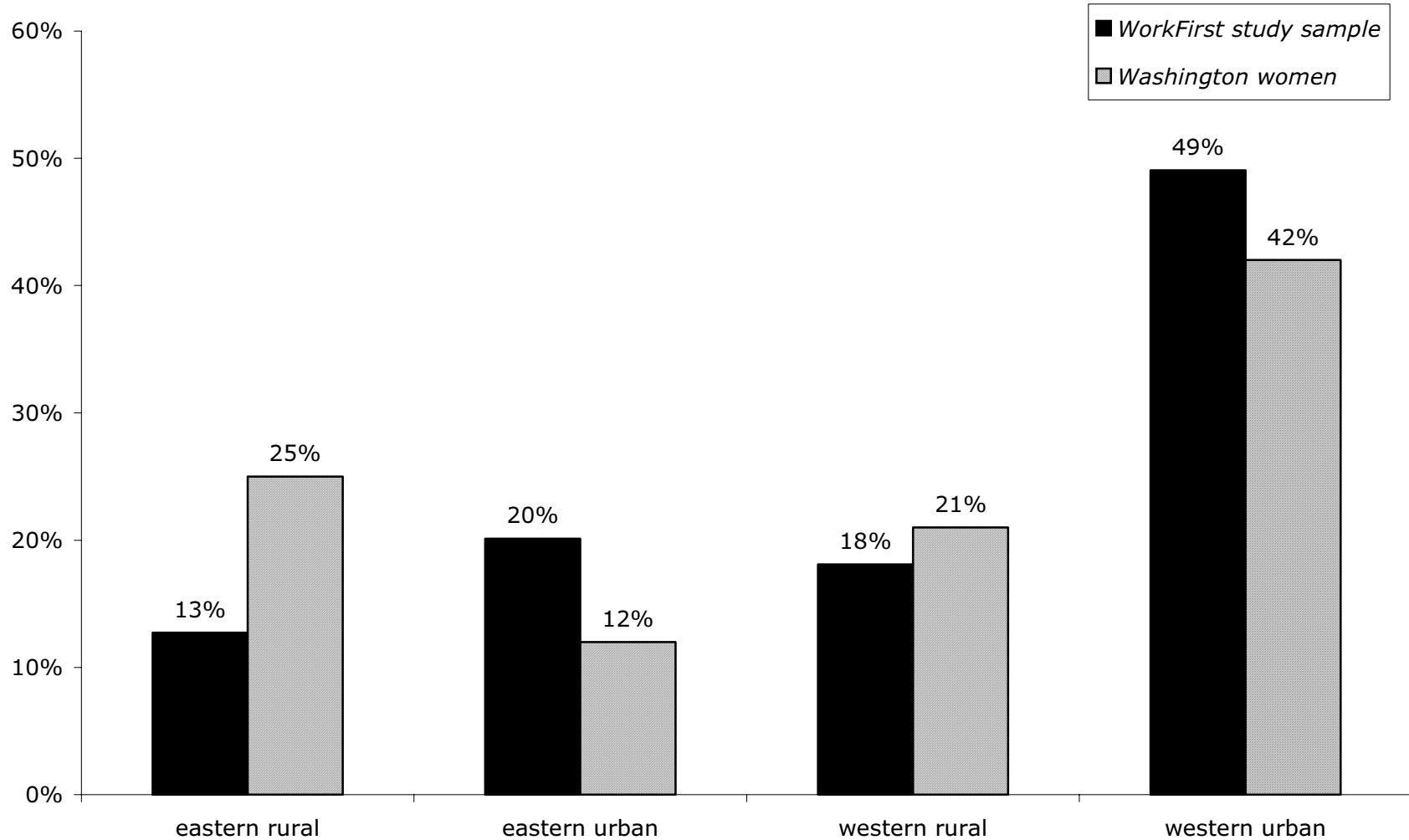
Eastern urban: Spokane County

Western rural: Clallam, Cowlitz, Grays Harbor, Island, Jefferson, Klickitat, Lewis, Mason, Pacific, San Juan, Wahkiakum, and Whatcom Counties

Western urban: Clark, King, Kitsap, Pierce, Snohomish, and Thurston Counties

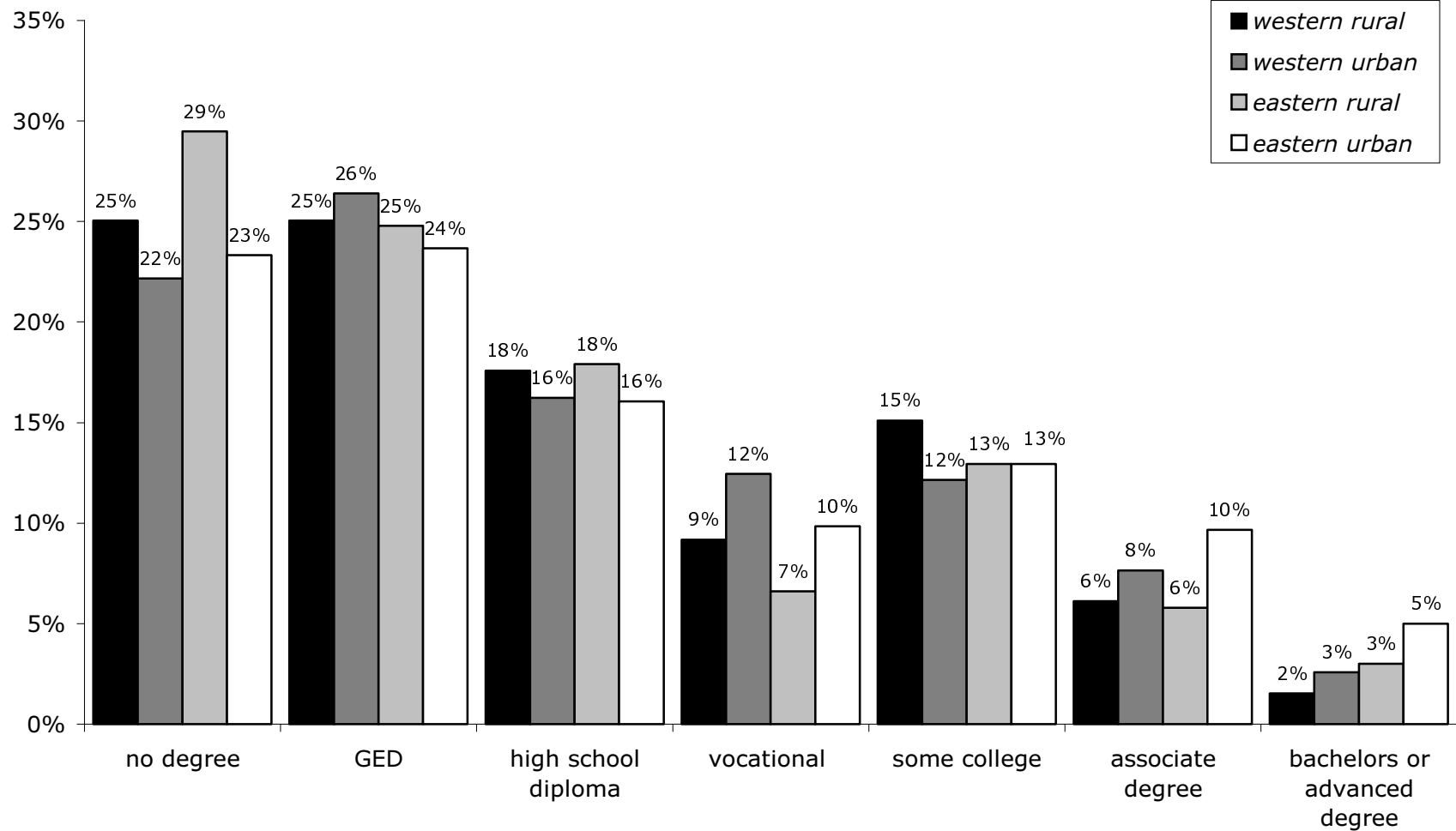
Geography of TANF Recipients

Almost half of all TANF recipients live in urban western Washington.



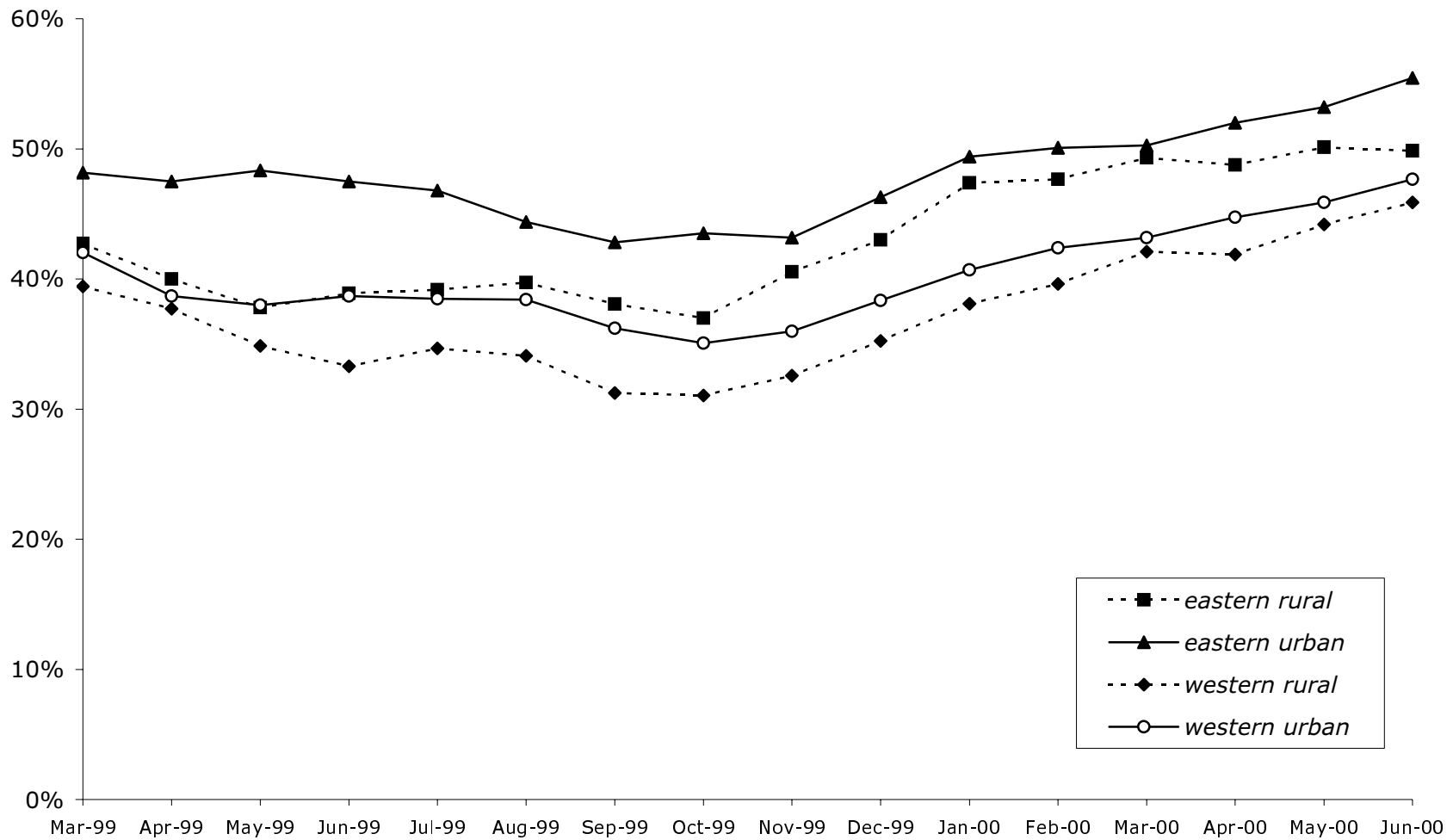
Education by Region

Highest degree or diploma by region of the state.



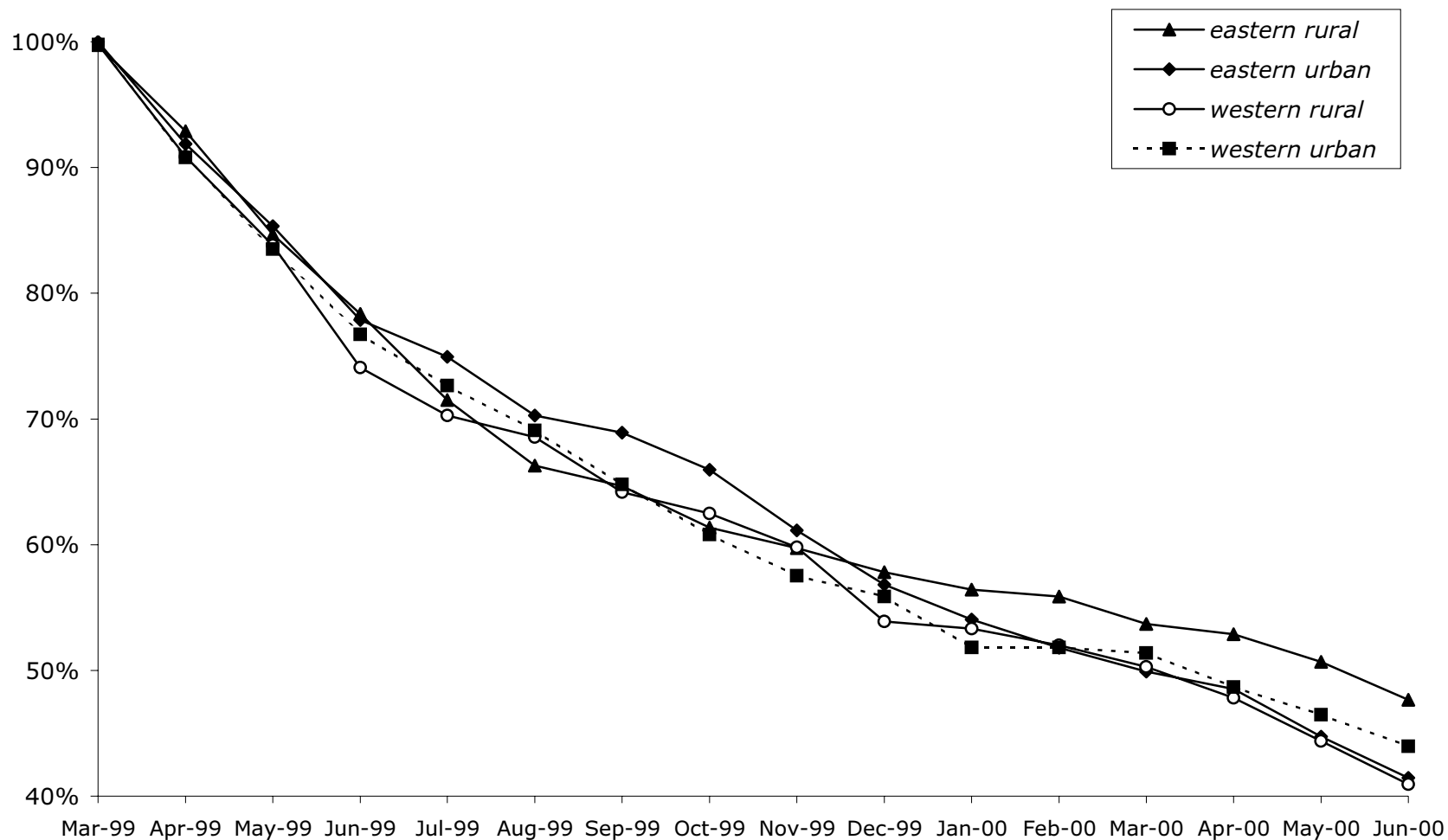
Monthly Employment Levels by Region

WorkFirst participants in Eastern Washington were employed at consistently higher rates throughout the year than were participants elsewhere in the state.



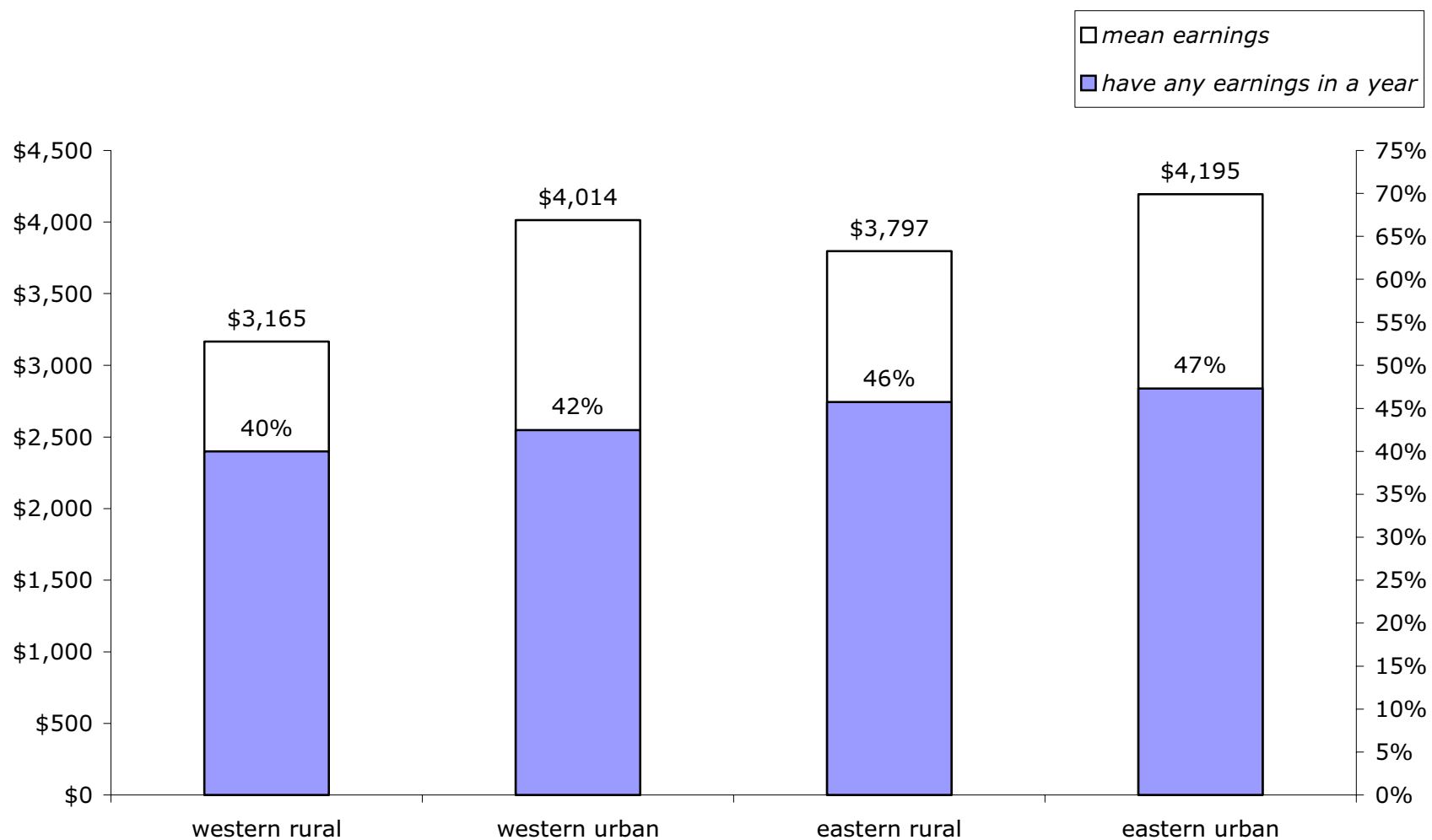
TANF Retention Levels by Region

Participants throughout the state's four regions are leaving WorkFirst at similar rates.



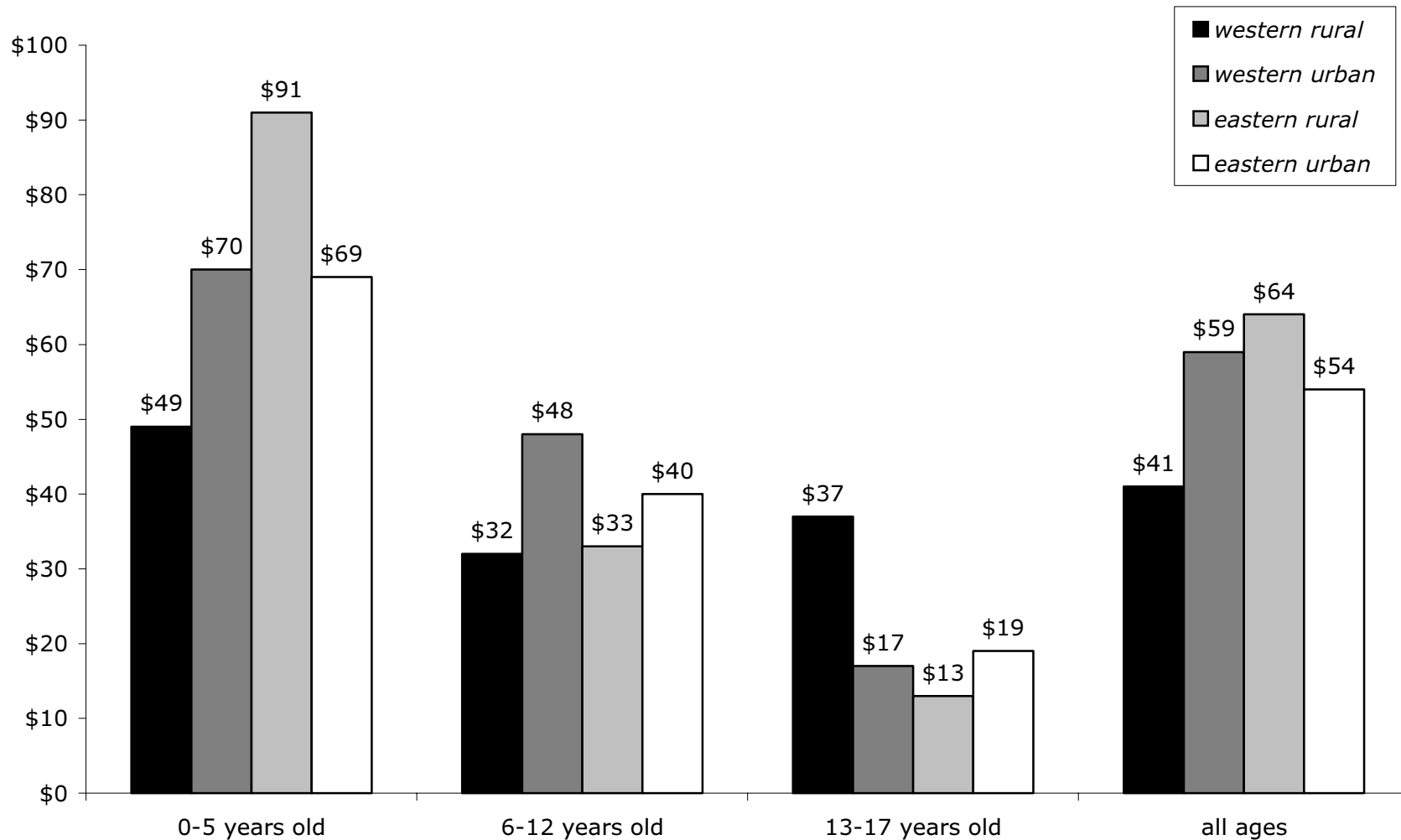
Regional Employment and TANF Receipt

Recipients in eastern urban Washington are more likely to have earnings, while recipients in western rural Washington have lower average earnings than other recipients.



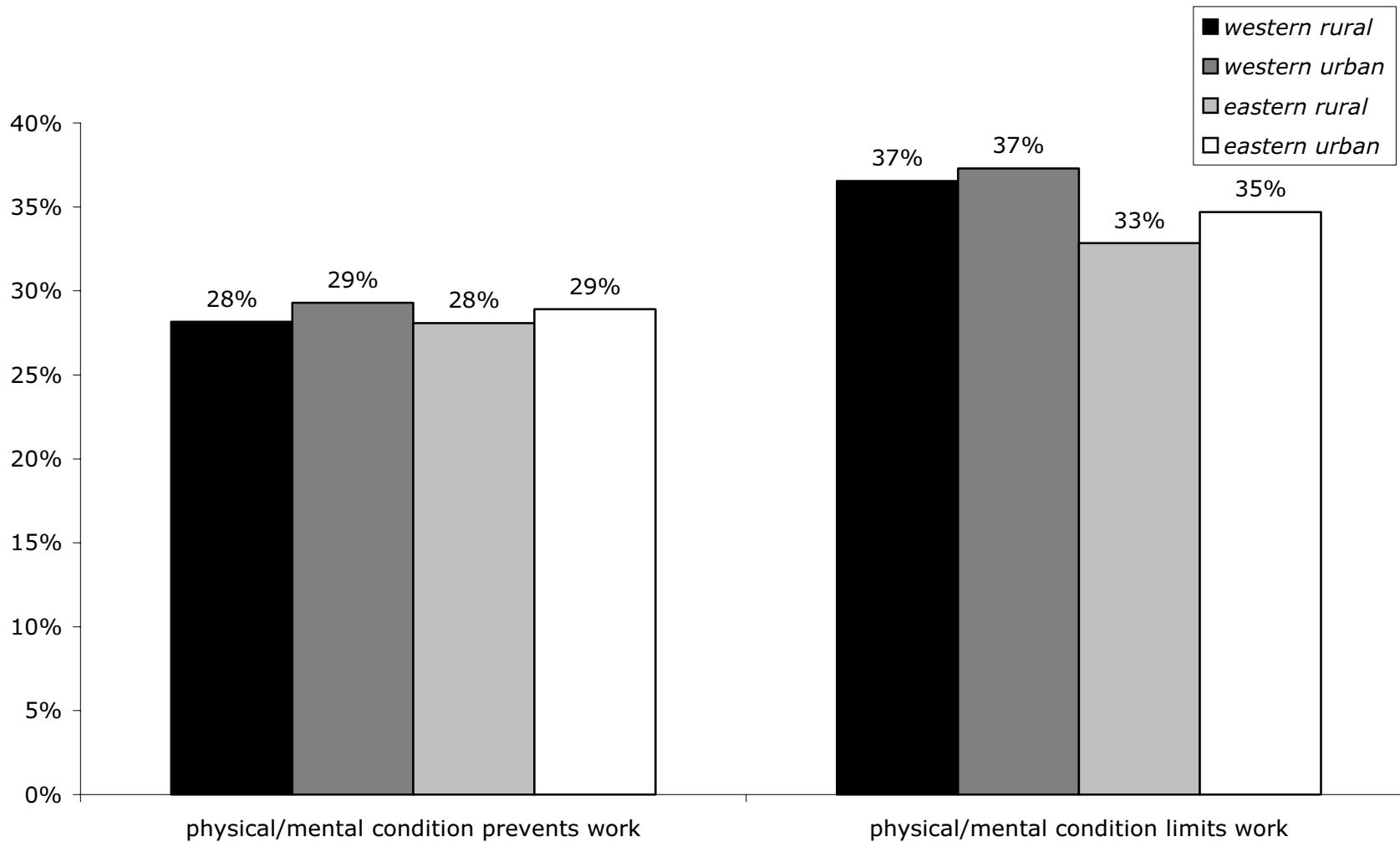
Childcare Costs by Region

Childcare for infants and preschoolers is much more expensive for WorkFirst participants in eastern rural Washington than elsewhere in the state.



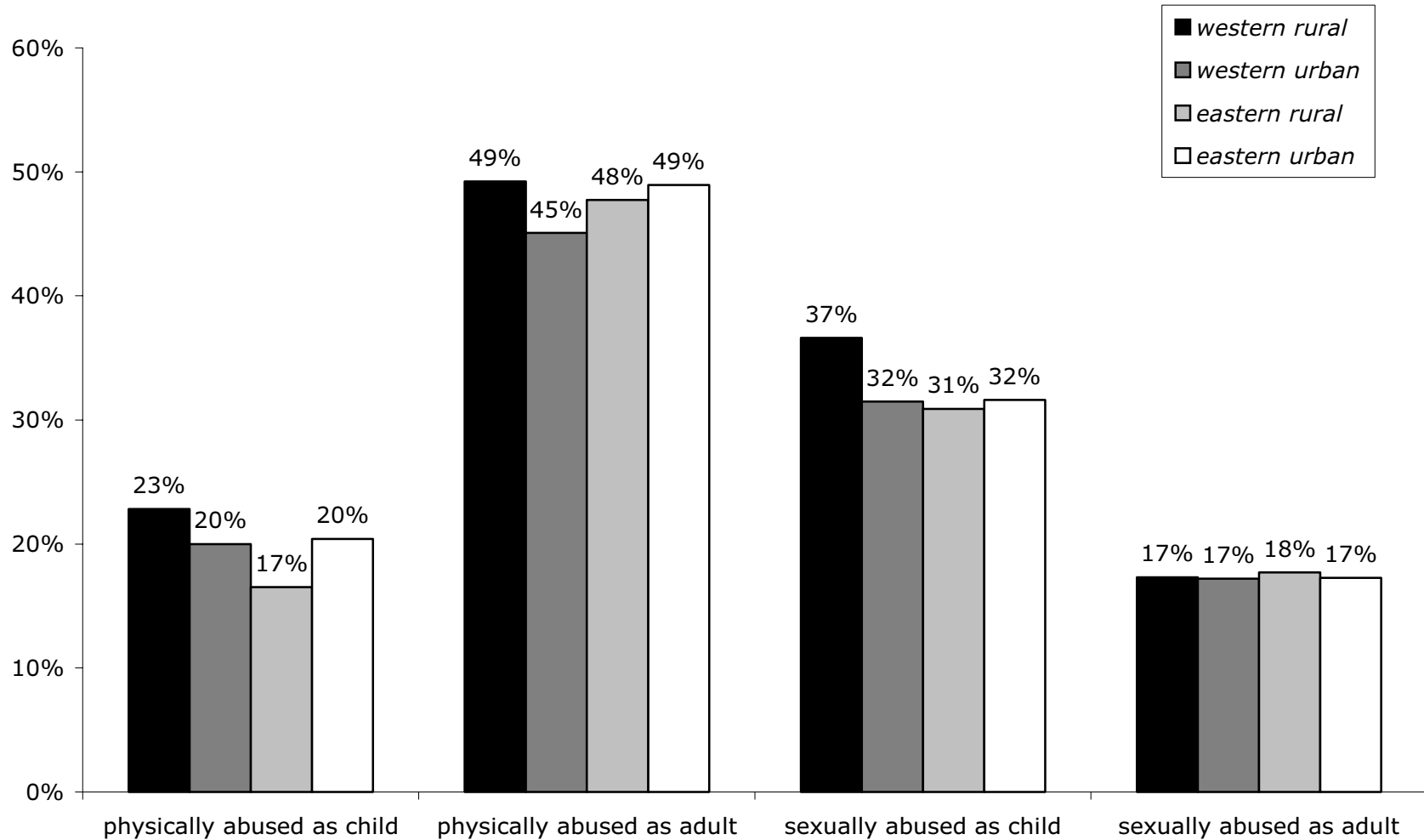
Limitations to Work by Region

Conditions that limit or prevent work are slightly more prevalent in the western regions of the state.



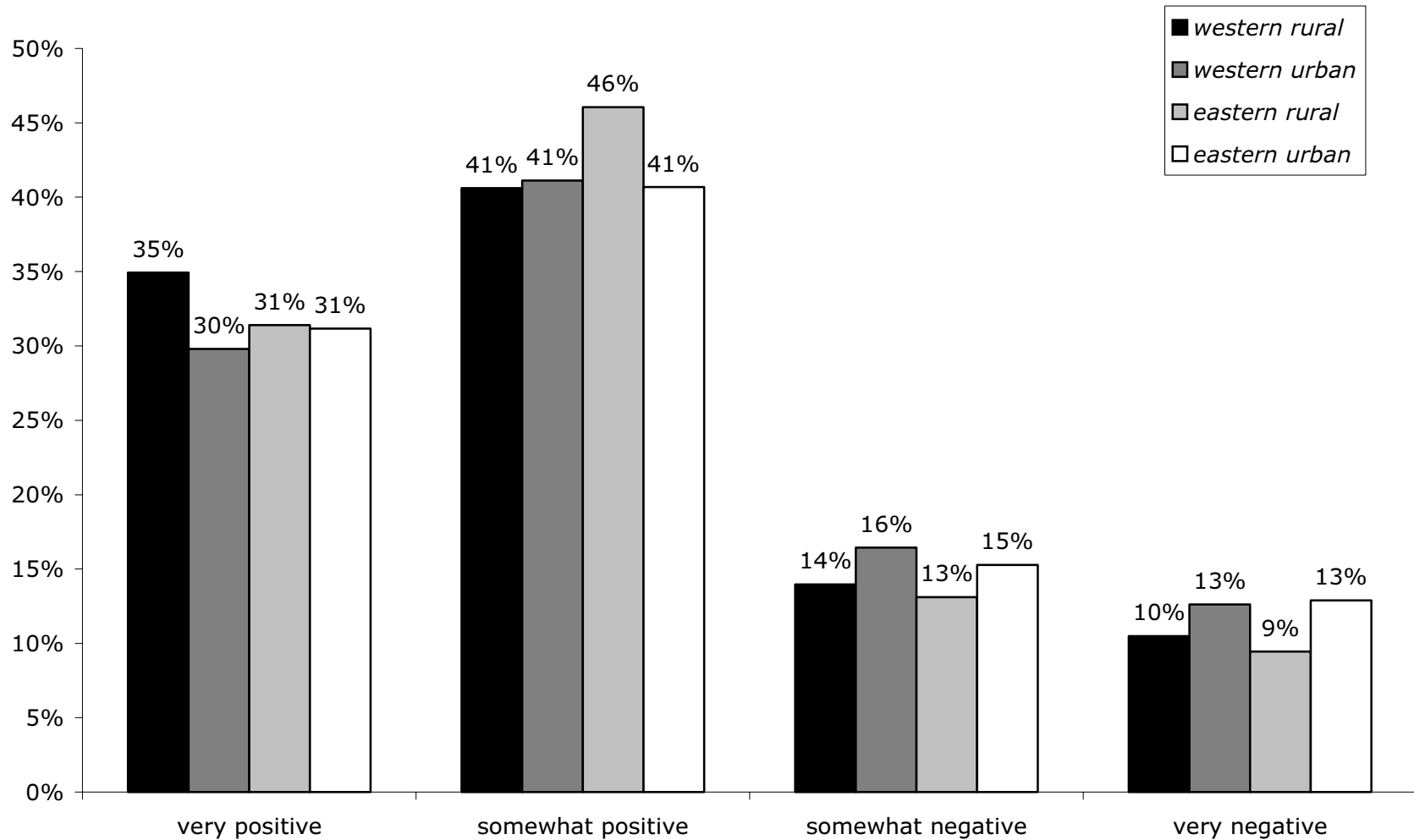
Domestic Violence by Region

Incidence of physical and sexual abuse by region.



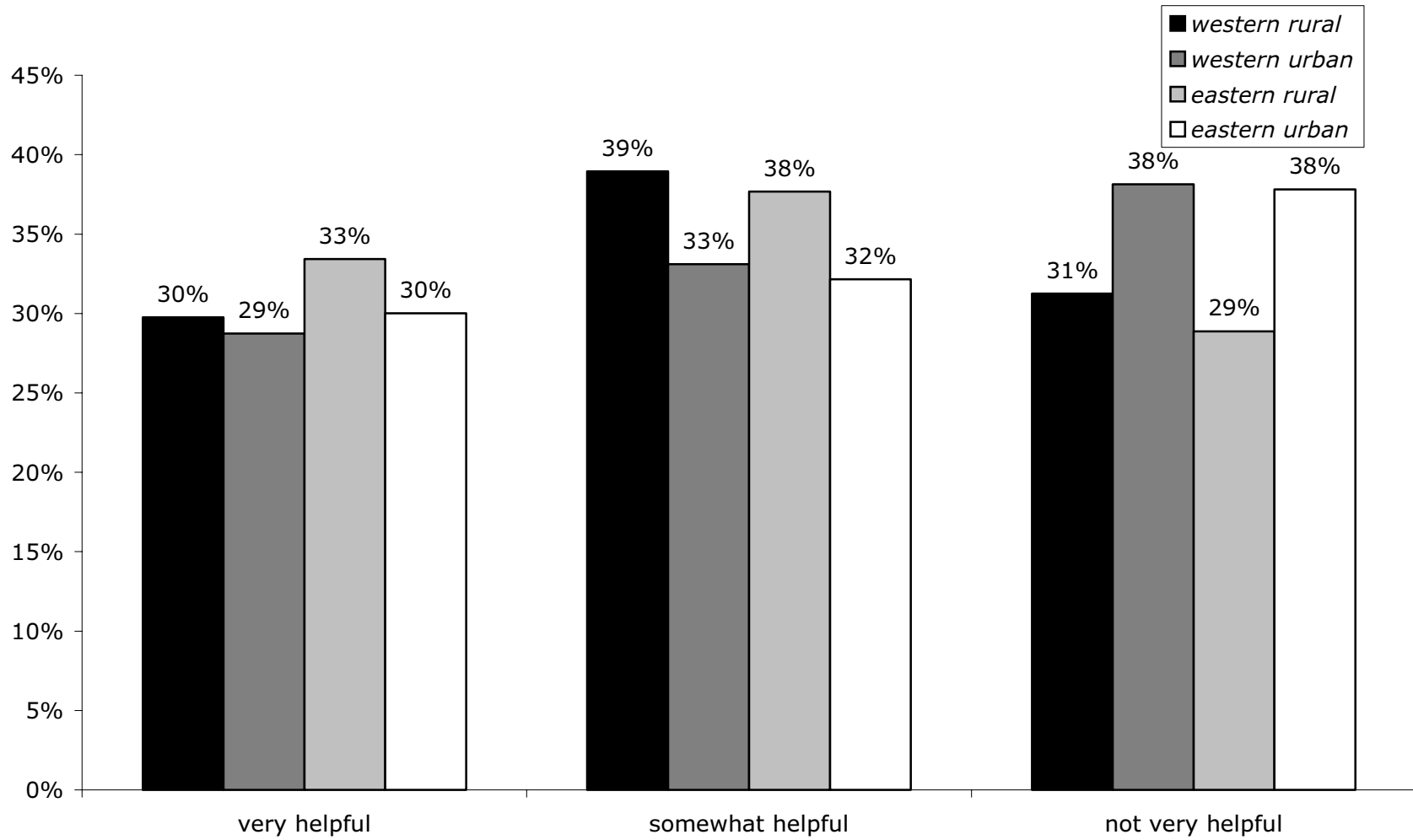
WorkFirst Impressions by Region

Recipients in the rural regions of the state have slightly more favorable impressions of WorkFirst than do their urban counterparts.



Self-Sufficiency by Region

More rural recipients consider TANF helpful in moving them towards self-sufficiency, while more urban recipients consider the program not very helpful.



Future TANF Use by Region

Recipients in eastern rural Washington are the most optimistic about the likelihood of being off assistance in twelve months.

